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DECEMBER 12-25, 2013 | ISSUE 484

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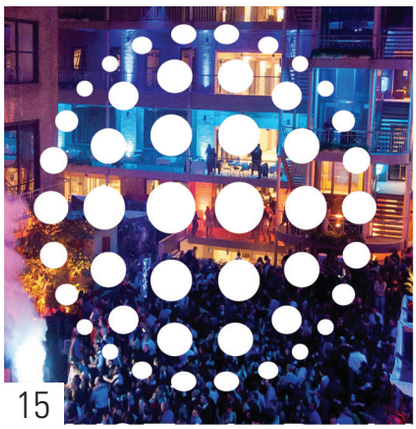
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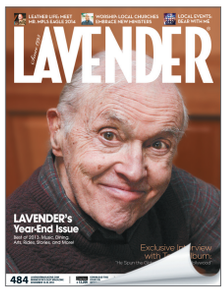
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ON THE COVER
Terry Kilburn, "He Spun the Globe--It Stopped at Hollywood." Photo by E.B. Boatner

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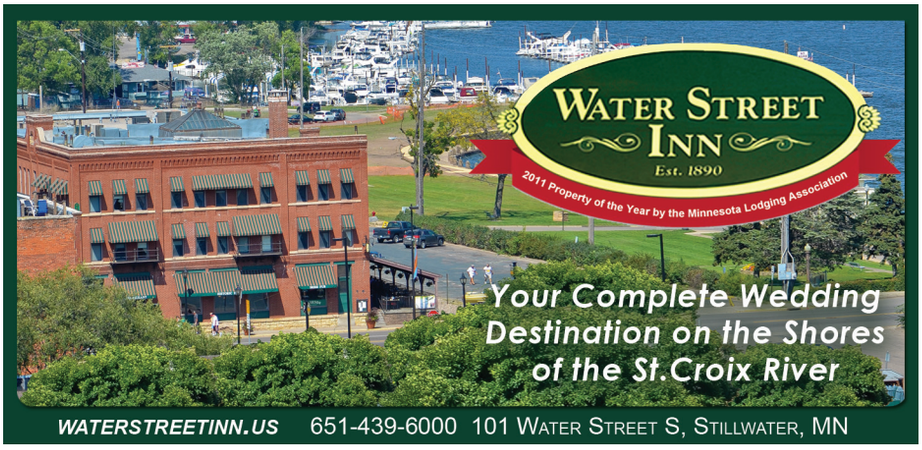
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612-436-4660 **Distribution**
612-436-4698 **Advertising**

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BIG GAY NEWS.COM BigGayNews.com

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Printer of Lavender
W.D. HOARD & SONS, CO. WEB PRINTING DIVISION
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A New Year on the Continuum

So many times, the turning of the year signifies the end, followed by a beginning. The end of bad habits, the beginning of resolutions. The end of Fiscal Year 2013, the beginning of Fiscal Year 2014. The end of a year of victories, the beginning of...well...can't we just remain victorious? As much as I like to give myself an end to something so that my beginning seems less random, we don't need to see the end of anything this last year brought us. We saw victory. Love won and is the law for same-sex couples. We saw growth. New GLBT and HIV housing and resource facilities opened. We saw rebirth. Some of our relationships became legally recognized, some of us transitioned from one gender to another, some of us made it through recovery. All of these are on a continuum, sometimes given a firm beginning but not requiring an absolute ending.

A comic recently crossed my screen from *Sunday Morning Breakfast Cereal* (www.smbc-comics.com) by Zach Weiner that explained in 14 comic panels how we have multiple lives to live, not just one. Our life begins again and again in various ways, every seven years, if we want it to. Seven is not an arbitrary number but it's how long it takes humans to master something; therefore, if we start at age 11 and live to 88, we can have 7 different lives. How optimistic. How glorious in its reframing. The idea that reinventing ourselves is an option, not a consequence. We can choose to begin a mastery of something for whatever reason, to whatever end, because it's part of our make-up and ability set as humans. A new project, a new job, a new hobby, a new philosophy, a new relationship, a new reason to be. But, what can't be overstated is that a beginning does not require an end. Our lives are cumulative. We add (and sometimes subtract) as we construct ourselves and our lives. We can be empowered by the notion that reinvention is part of the equation.

Some of us reinvented ourselves as activists during the past few years in the fight against the marriage amendment and campaign for the freedom to marry. The fight for marriage equality is over in Minnesota, for the most part. The nationwide one wages on...and there's a vigilance that will probably always have to be considered in Minnesota. E.B. Boatner speaks of politicians trying to revoke rights of different groups in various ways and we have to always keep in mind that such tactics are out there. But, as far as our activism is concerned, we're still basking in the afterglow...our honeymoon. I was talking to Monica Meyer of OutFront Minnesota at Lavender's December First Thursday and we both talked about how nice things are at this time, that evening, in our lives. Things are just good. We smiled and observed the moment, but I made sure to ask her, "What's next?" The fight continues. We continue. And the fight goes on against bullying in our schools, where we will continue to be victorious this next year.

Our Slice writer, Joy Summers, and I have been friends for years. Our beginning was long ago, probably 1999. We began our work at Lavender at nearly the same time, in 2011, and she quickly moved into the role of Food Editor and writer of our restaurant coverage in her biweekly column called "Slice." Her last column is in this issue, but she will continue her food writing in different publications in the Cities and on the worldwide web, including in Lavender, just not as our Food Editor, but more in features. She and I will continue to work together long into our future, and I thank her as a friend and colleague for her 50+ columns in our publication that garnered back-to-back Bronze MMPA Awards and resulted in so many calories and laughs. I look forward to a new beginning with her successor in our first issue of the new year–not an ending, but multiple beginnings for all of us.

Lavender, itself, continues to grow and advance as a media platform including the magazine, website, social networking, and events. Just wait until you meet and remeet a few of our new contributors in the first issue of the new year, in sports and restaurant coverage. Early in the new year, we'll look a little sharper in our design and really tighten up our presence. We'll be offering nearly double the features in every issue as I mentioned last month, and our reach will expand and be more diverse. Our audience–readers, subjects, advertisers–as well as people who have yet to consider themselves to be members of our community will see even more improvement in our product this next year. We will continue to represent this community with great breadth and depth in new and better ways.

I look forward to continuing our relationship. It might be on paper, online, or in person at events. I might see you at a rally or a performance. You might write an email or a comment on our Facebook page. We could run into each other in the waiting room of one of Lavender's advertisers. We are part of this community together and I am grateful.

Happy New Year.

With continued love and thanks,

Andy □

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It's Not Just For Thanksgiving

A friend was deciding whether or not to write his holiday letter to family and friends this year, musing that nothing much noteworthy had happened in 2013.

I mentioned his steady growth in business, his accomplished goals in exercise, and his trip. I don't have family with which to exchange letters, but I, too, could count many blessings in my life. As we chatted, it became clear that there were plenty of plusses to add to our bounty once we stopped thinking about those things we *didn't* have.

On the most basic level, I have shelter, food, and clean water. I have friends and companionship and 900 book-filled square feet to call home. Looking beyond my own bailiwick, I'm extremely fortunate that I live in a state that has now made it possible for all its adult citizens to find that special partner, of whatever gender, marry, and create homes and families. Whether I personally want to marry or not, I now legally have that right.

It's good to give thanks during this holiday season, and while at times it may seem excessive and overdone to keep harping on our sufficiency, there is a darker, compelling reason as well. Even as we enjoy our good fortune here in Minnesota, there are many in America working tirelessly to take away those very things, removing rights gained, while keeping the have-nots from moving up into a dignified life.

Consider those dragging voter registration back to the 1960s, working to keep the minimum wage at poverty levels, and scheming to repeal existing laws granting equal marriage rights to same-sex couples. Transgender acceptance, still, is all too frequently denied. Kathy Svenson of the Delta County (Colorado) School Board recently dismissed the idea of allowing trans students in her district stating, "Not until the plumbing's changed. There would have to be castration in order to pass something like that around here." She's thinking *transwomen* here, obviously and did not mention "requirements" requirements for *transmen*.

So continue to examine your life and give thanks for all that you have. It's a worthwhile practice in and of itself, but consider it a proactive endeavor and keep an eye on the cold equations of reality. Eternal vigilance is still the price of freedom. □

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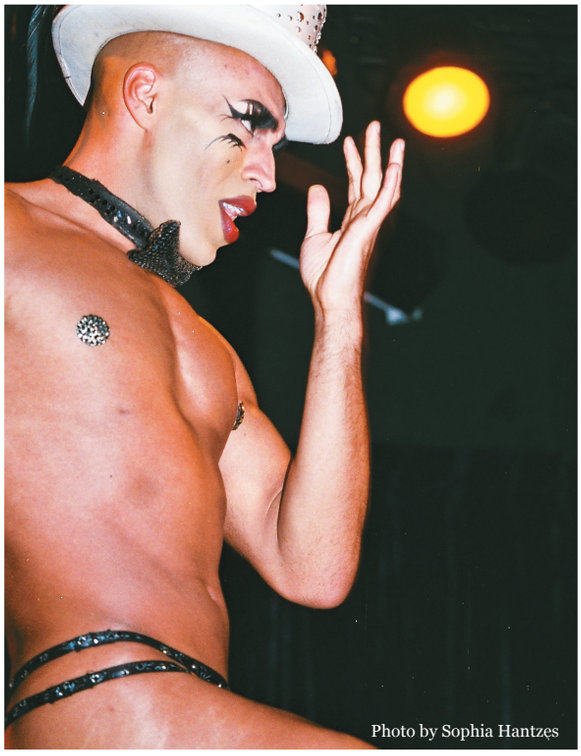

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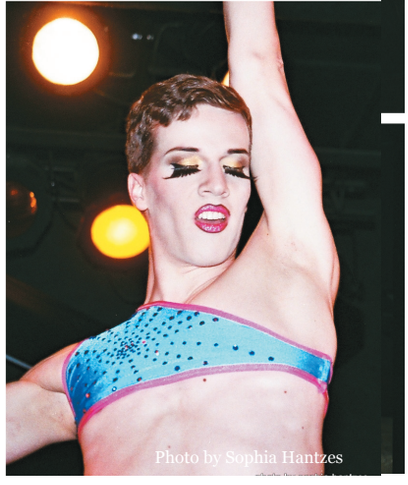

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WORLD AIDS DAY - THE ALIVENESS PROJECT OPEN HOUSE
DECEMBER 1, 2013


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"BEAR" WITH ME (WHILE I TELL YOU ABOUT) ...

by Barry Leavitt

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NORTH COUNTRY BEARS JANUARY MIDNIGHT POOL PARTY
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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW | E.B. Boather



TERRY KILBURN

He Spun the Globe-It Stopped at Hollywood

Terry Kilburn, actor, director, artistic director, recently talked at length with this Lavender writer about his early life, describing in cinematic detail how the only child of working class parents, Tom and Alice Kilburn, came to star in Hollywood at MGM delivering such coveted film lines as, "God bless us, every one," and "Goodbye, Mr. Chips." Born November 25, 1926, in London, he appeared in over 25 films, including, along with those mentioned here in detail, National Velvet (1944, with Liz Taylor), and Only the Valiant (1951, with Gregory Peck). His extensive stage work will appear in part two of this interview.

My father was a bus conductor, taking tickets on those big double-deck busses. He'd run up and down the stairs making jokes and entertaining– sometimes he'd have the whole bus laughing. I think he would liked to have gone on the stage, he was a natural entertainer.

My mother was a housewife, and in the summertime used to run a boarding house at Clackton-on-Sea, where working-class people went for their week's holiday. She was in the kitchen and making the beds and setting tables from morning to night. My father stayed up in London and would come down on the weekends in a little baby Austin car about the size of this dining table. I had a lot of time to myself.

There was an amusement pier where a man called Clown Bertram ran a little theater. Children would come up on the stage and do a little something, then the one who got the most applause would get a prize. I was much too shy to do that although I loved watching the show.

One time, my mother had some friends who left their two children for her to take care of. The little girl sang a song and did a dance on

Continued on page 18

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Clown Bertram's stage, and she won the first prize. The next day, I got over my shyness enough to go up and I sang a song. I was a big flop, but it broke the ice. I was about seven.

Without realizing it, little Terry had already been learning his craft.

My parents used to take me with them to the movies. Movies then were an incredible source of entertainment for poor and working class people. For a sixpence, or a shilling, you could see the main feature and a companion feature, a newsreel, a short subject, a cartoon. Most theaters still had a couple of stage acts from vaudeville, and on top of all that, up from the orchestra pit would come an organ, all lit up, and you'd have a community sing.

I started impersonating these people that I saw on the screen, Jean Harlow, Greta Garbo, Mae West, Zazu Pitts, Charles Laughton, and Ronald Colman. Sometimes, I'd do impersonations for relatives spontaneously, but usually, my shyness overcame me and I couldn't. But when this girl won the first prize, that got my competitive spirit up. The second time, I went up and did some impersonations and won hands down. It was like an electric light going on over my head. Many actors will tell you of this experience, when they first realize that they have an ability to bring out that response from an audience. From then on, I was on that stage every day.

Terry neglected to tell his parents that Clown Bertram had added him, unpaid, to the regular show. Some guests finally enlightened his astonished mother.

My father was very interested, and when we got back to London he submitted me for amateur night competitions. I worked up a little act, doing my impersonations and I came on singing, "OK Toots," an Eddie Cantor song. That's kind of interesting because later on Eddie Cantor played an important part in my life, and I did a little tap dance that I taught myself, having seen Fred Astaire.

The first prize was something like ten pounds, while my father–this was in the Depression–was making two pounds a week. We started going around the circuit, to all these huge old variety houses that seated two thousand people. My big ending was a scene from David Copperfield, where Mr. Murdstone, the wicked stepfather, beats David. I did both parts, and ended sobbing and having hysterics on the floor as David, then standing up with a big smile and bowing.

Through what we today call "networking," one thing led to another.

Into our lives came Freddie Newton. He was a Dickensian character, a little Cockney who wore checked suits and sharp hats. He had a candy store and was a bookmaker. He helped polish up my act and took me up to the West End of London to meet an actor, Hugh Wakefield. I did my act and Wakefield commented, "I don't quite know what I just saw, but whatever it is I think he should meet my agent.'

This turned out to be a woman who went only by "Connie," Ralph Richardson's agent, who told his parents, "You've got to get him to Hollywood." She then introduced them to a visiting Hollywood lawyer, Roger Marchetti.

Marchetti said, "If you come to Hollywood, you can count on me. I will do everything I can to see that you get auditioned." Well, when I heard that! Can you think of a thing in your own childhood, the thing that just meant more to you than anything and obsessed your mind? I used to sit up in bed with a globe and spin it and make it stop on the United States.

I think none of this would have happened if it hadn't been this particular time during the Depression. People had so little to lose. There was a sense of camaraderie and an atmosphere of, "Well, let's try it!"

There was a great resistance by the U.S. Consulate in London to giving the whole family visas. In the end, after much finagling, Tom stayed behind while Alice and Terry travelled to the United States.

My mother was an amazing combination of guts and timidity. She would take chances that other women of her generation and education would never have dreamed of doing, but she was frightened to death of dogs and the ocean. She'd never been out of London, let alone England, so she would only go on the Queen Mary. We booked the cheapest third-class passage.

Finally, we arrived in Los Angeles. Now this is in April-May of 1937. In those days, the station in downtown Los Angeles was in Chinatown and it was just awful, an old shack that was falling apart. All of our dreams of Hollywood, and out of this glamorous vision we were seeing this terrible slum. And there, in bright, blooming sunshine, was Mr. Marchetti with a huge bunch of red roses, standing next to this immense Packard convertible and chauffeur. It was a surreal picture.

They had expected to stay with Marchetti and his family but were quickly disabused of that idea. He was very much a bachelor, as well as a handsomelypaid celebrity divorce lawyer, e.g., (Myrtle) Hardy vs. (Oliver) Hardy.

He didn't want some English lady and her little boy in his house, so we ended up in a bungalow court, with Murphy beds that pulled out of the wall. We started on the rounds, seeing producers and so forth, and Mr. Marchetti was good to his word. He certainly did his best, but the problem was me. The excitement o performing on stage, or for somebody in his dressing room, seemed to stimulate me and make me a good performer. Now, to have to go into these big offices with people sitting in big swivel chairs smoking cigars–it was too much for a little boy to cope with. And my personality, everything that had made people say "Yes! He's got something!" just disappeared.

Even more so when they made screen tests. If Marilyn Monroe hadn't ever gotten in front of a camera, she would have been working in a beauty parlor. She came to life in front of the camera. It was just the opposite for me. The tests were usually shot in the corner of a sound stage where no movie was being filmed at the time, huge, ghostly sound stages about the size of an airplane hangar. It was overwhelming.

A year went by, and the money had run out. Mr. Marchetti said we could move into an apartment over his garage. My mother agreed. She didn't know what else to do. So we moved, not into his Florentine mansion, but into the garage apartment. He had two Doberman pinscher dogs. My mother was terrified of them, and the apartment was infested with mice.

The whole venture was coming to a bad end. My mother finally told me, "We have to go back, we can't just stay here forever." At that very time, my mother got a letter from my father: "I'm getting a ship and I'm coming to Canada, and I'm going to come through the border because I know people do it all the time. I'm on my way! By the time you get this, I be on the Atlantic."

And then, the cavalry came riding.

Mr. Marchetti had pretty much given up, but his assistant took pity on us: "One thing we haven't tried is radio. Let me see what I can do about getting an audition." Eddie Cantor's business manager said, "I think Eddie would love him." I auditioned, and he did!

Cantor's popular radio program also showcased stars and young actors like Deanna Durbin and Bobby Breen.

We were in rehearsal when a talent scout for MGM showed up. They were about to make a movie called *Lord Jeff* with Freddie Bartholomew and Mickey Rooney, based on the true story of those famous English orphanages, Doctor Bernardo's Homes, where they trained young boys to go into the Royal Navy. There was a part for a little Lancashire boy, Albert Baker. The scout asked, "Can you do a Lancashire accent?" I said, "Aye I can, I can do it." I'd learned "'hae t' talk like that," sort of through my nose. "By goom, that's champion!" "Oh my God!," he said. "Sam Wood will just be thrilled."

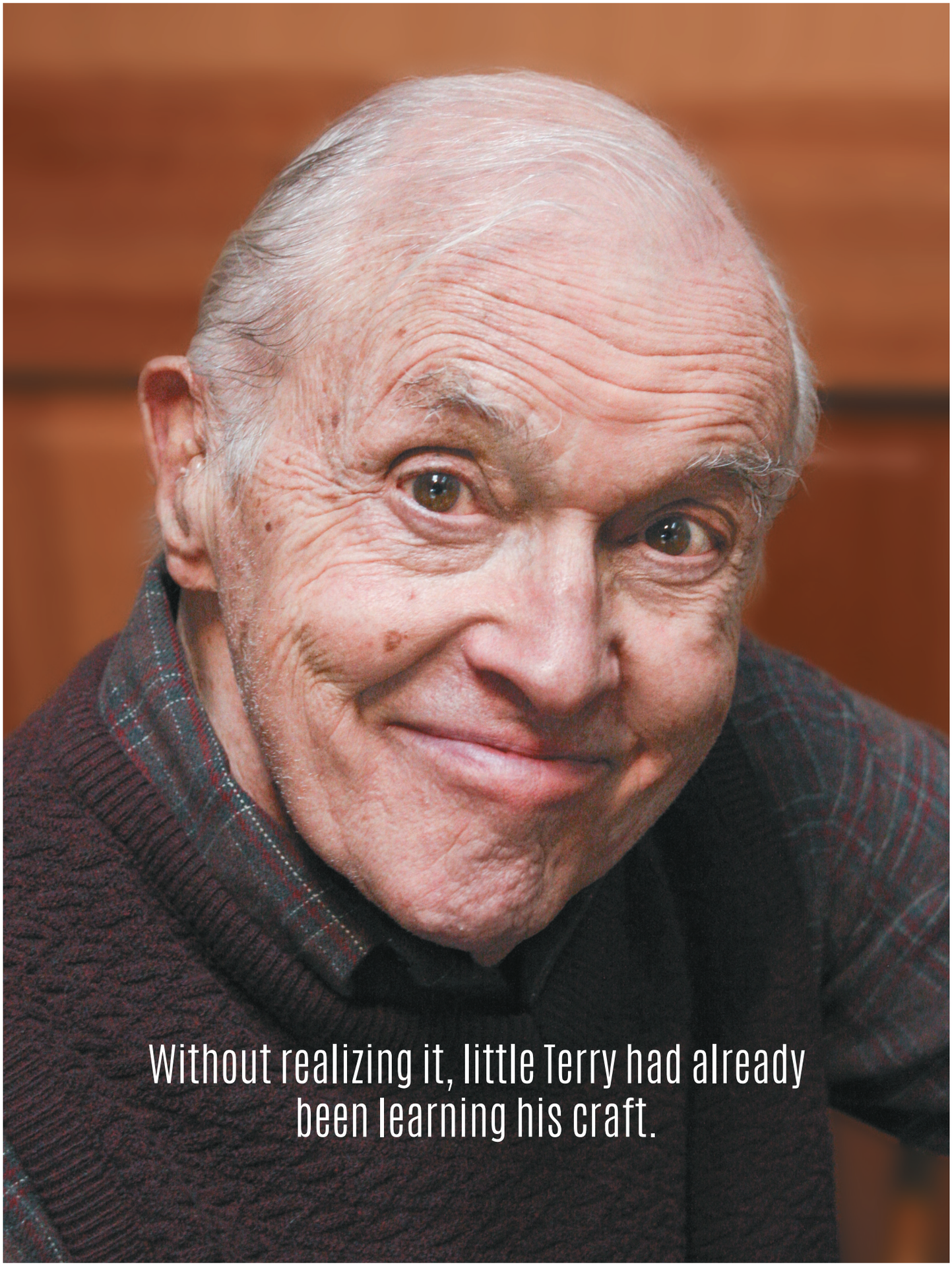


Photo by E.B. Boatner

Continued on page 20





Even at that age, an actor will see a part and say, "Oh, that is *my* part." Often they're wrong, but sometimes they're right, like Vivien Leigh thinking she was Scarlett. So I went to see director Sam Wood, and I did a thing for him, and he said, "The accent's great, but I really wanted Alfalfa for this part." Alfalfa could no more do that accent than fly, so that was out. But he wanted a kid like him. I was kind of a pretty little boy, so he said, "I'm sorry, but no."

Fortunately, Terry's mother had become friends with Lillian Rosine, MGM's makeup specialist.

When I came back in tears Lillian said, "Oh, for God's sake! What does Sam Wood think I'm here for? And she put me in her makeup chair, greased down my hair with Vaseline, blacked out one of my front teeth, put freckles on my face. I'd been crying, so I already looked horrible. Then she took me back and dragged me in and said, "There now, does he look ugly enough for you?" Sam Wood laughed and said, "Okay."

One day while we were shooting, somebody came and said, "You're wanted outside." So I went out from the dark soundstage into the bright sunshine, and standing there was my father. I just ran and leapt into his arms, and we laughed and cried and it was incredible. *Lord Jeff* was quite a success. I got fabulous reviews that said, "The busman's son from London steals the show." It was thrilling. A dream come true–and my father was there, loving every minute of it.

I also made *A Christmas Carol* in '38, and played Tiny Tim. I'll always remember going onto the set at the MGM lot the first day. I think it was London 1830, and the snow was coming down–they were actually Kellogg's cornflakes, bleached or something, but it was so beautiful. Oh, you can imagine that for a kid who loved acting and being in fantasy, it was extraordinary.

He attended school at MGM, encountering Lana Turner, Kathryn Grayson, Anne Baxter–and, briefly, Judy Garland.

I sat next to Judy Garland for one day and just fell in love with her. She found my English accent absolutely hilarious. She had this wonderful laugh. And she had a charm bracelet with a tiny gold-framed picture of Clark Gable, because that song had made her a big success: "Dear Mr. Gable."

He appeared in Sweethearts *next, with Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddy, and was scheduled to be in a* Topper *film, when his part was cut.*

That didn't bother me because by this time, just before Christmas, 1938, I was cast in *Goodbye Mr. Chips,* and was being sent back to England. Robert Donat would not come to this country for tax reasons. Greer Garson had been cast as the wife; she was a total unknown, had never made a movie in Hollywood. We went back on the Normandie. Greer Garson was on the ship, but she was up in first class.

"Chips" was professor Charles Edward Chipping whose career at Brookfield School progresses from young, stuffy classics prof, to beloved "Mr. Chips," to Head of Brookfield during the Great War. Terry played four generations of Colley boys, and, as the youngest, Peter Colley III, says his iconic line to the elderly Chips who passes in his sleep recalling "his boys." With Robert Donat, Greer Garson, John Mills, Paul Heinreid, from James Hilton's novel.

Donat was wonderful, fascinating. I was old enough to see and respect what he was doing. Movie sets are notorious for fooling around. If it's not much of a movie it doesn't matter, but Donat realized this was the part of a lifetime, and he was very serious. When he got into playing the old Chips, he stayed in character the whole time, even between shots.

I tried to make each one of the four boys somewhat different, but I could only do as much as the scene allowed. Of course, I got to say, "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," in this huge, wonderful close-up. Actors would give their souls for a close-up like that.

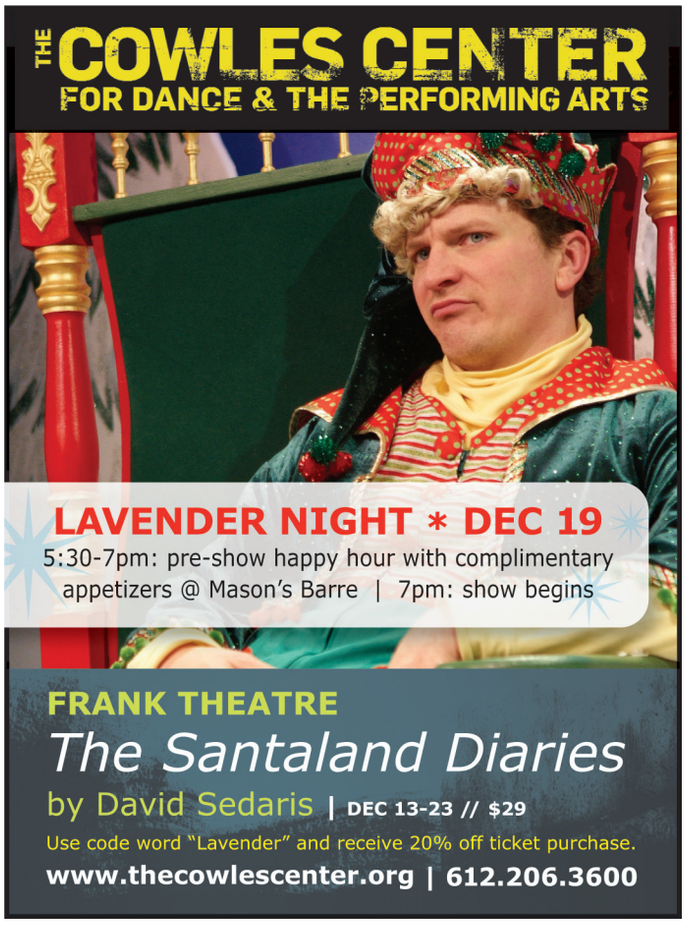
About that final shot: I wasn't even supposed to be there since it was against the law for children to work that late. They just looked the other way, and it was almost midnight when I had that close-up.

Actors, like their characters, exist at the whim of chance and happenstance. For instance: What if Terry had known how to swim? What if Mickey Rooney had been taller?

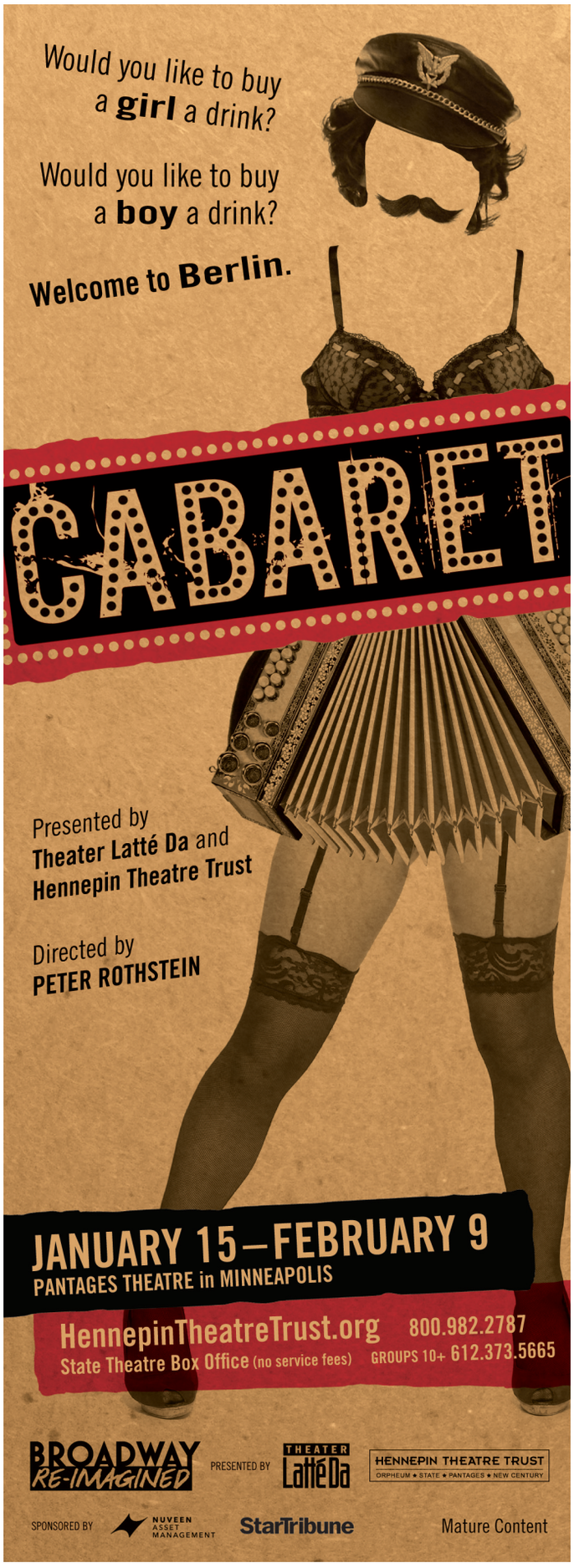
There was a sequence in *Lord Jeff* where they wanted me to fall in the water. I couldn't swim. I was terrified, even though they put a life jacket under my little sailor suit. I finally got up enough nerve, but only by looking first and jumping. That wasn't what they wanted. I was so humiliated, so ashamed that I had disappointed Mr. Wood that my parents got me into swimming. I used to swim all the time, and I think that probably caused me to grow.

When I came back to Hollywood after making *Chips*, I was scheduled to be in a number of pictures with Mickey Rooney, playing his sidekick. But suddenly, instead of being twelve and looking ten, I was now twelve looking fourteen, and was as tall or taller than Mickey. My option was not taken up, and that began the next period of my life. □

The second half of our interview with Terry Kilburn will appear in Issue 486 on January 9, 2014.


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YEAR IN REVIEW
2013
PERFORMING ARTS

BY JOHN TOWNSEND

BEST PRODUCTIONS

1. *Stick Fly*, Park Square Theatre
2. *Other Desert Cities*, Guthrie Theater
3. *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, Walking Shadow Company
4. *Skiing on Broken Glass*, Guthrie Theater
5. *The Sexual Life of Savages*, Walking Shadow Company
6. *the road weeps, the well runs dry*, Pillsbury House Theatre
7. *Or*, Park Square Theatre
8. *Tribes*, Guthrie Theater
9. *Elemeno Pea*, Mixed Blood Theatre
10. (tie) *Unraveled*, Theatre Unbound; *The Chronicles of Kalki*, Mixed Blood Theatre

A Strange and Separate People, Minnesota Jewish Theatre

THEATER ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Marion McClinton: Director of *Stick Fly* at Park Square Theatre, *the road weeps, the well runs dry* at Pillsbury House Theatre, *Jackie and Me* at Children's Theatre Company, and *Buzzer*, a Pillsbury House Theatre production at the Guthrie Theater

FOREMOST SINGULAR ACHIEVEMENTS IN DIRECTION

Joe Dowling, *Skiing on Broken Glass*, Guthrie Theater
Amy Rummenie, *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, Walking Shadow Company

BEST SOLO PERFORMANCE:

Wade Vaughn, *Cul-de-Sac*, Loudmouth Collective



Stick Fly. Photo courtesy of Park Square Theatre

BEST CROSSGENDER PERFORMANCE:

David Hanbury, *Mrs. Smith Live!*, Camp Bar Cabaret Theater

BEST ACTRESS–DRAMA:

Jodi Kellogg, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, Gremlin Theatre

BEST ACTRESS–COMEDY:

Emily Gunyou Halaas, *Or*, Park Square Theatre



Emily Gunyou Halaas in Or, Photo courtesy of Park Square Theatre

BEST ACTRESS–MUSICAL:

Jill Iverson, *Carrie*, Minneapolis Musical Theatre/Hennepin Theatre Trust

BEST ACTOR–DRAMA:

John McGinty, *Tribes*, Guthrie Theater



A Strange and Separate People. Photo by Sarah Whiting

Continued on page 24

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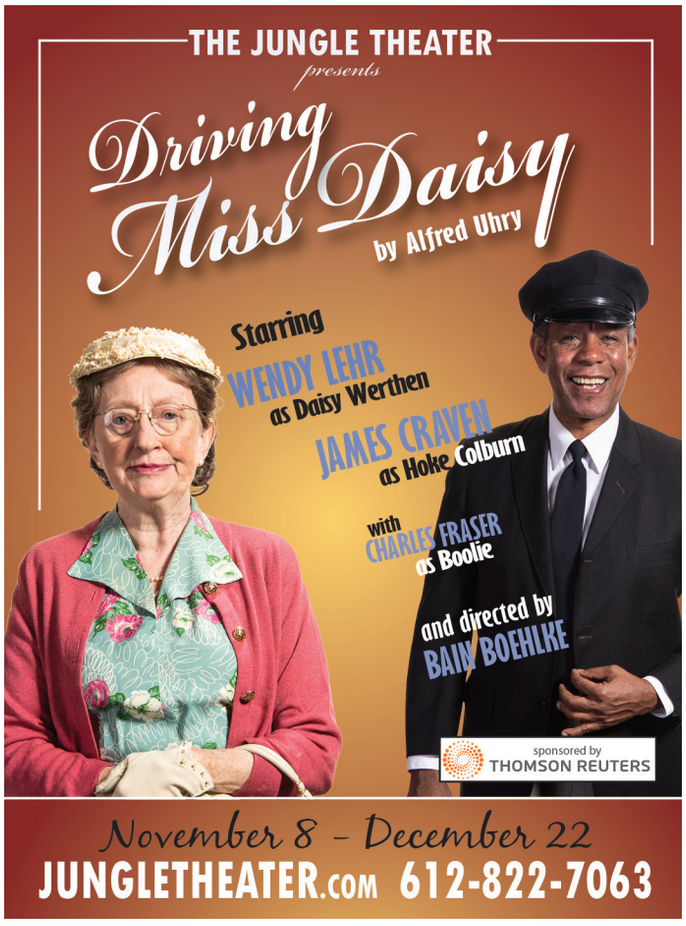
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If You Give a Mouse a Cookie. Photo by Dan Norman



Ben Bakken in *AIDA.* Photo by Michal Daniel

BEST ACTOR–COMEDY:

Dean Holt, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, Children's Theatre Company

BEST ACTOR–MUSICAL:

Tim Kuehl, *Sunset Boulevard*, Minneapolis Musical Theatre/ Hennepin Theatre Trust

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS–DRAMA:

Sally Wingert, *Other Desert Cities*, Guthrie Theater

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS–COMEDY:

Laurine Price, *Elemeno Pea*, Mixed Blood Theater

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS–MUSICAL:

Lori Maxwell, *Carrie*, Minneapolis Musical Theatre/Hennepin Theatre Trust



The Sexual Life of Savages. Photo by Dan Norman

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR–DRAMA:

David Brinkley, *Other Desert Cities*, Guthrie Theater

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR–COMEDY:

Nicholas Leeman, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, Walking Shadow Company

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR–MUSICAL:

Ben Bakken, *Aida*, Theater Latté Da/Hennepin Theatre Trust

BEST MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Andrew Fleser, *This Side of Paradise*, History Theatre

BEST SET DESIGN – LARGE HOUSE:

Alexander Dodge, *Tribes*, Guthrie Theater

BEST SET DESIGN – SMALL HOUSE:

Rob Jensen, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, Walking Shadow Company

BEST COSTUME DESIGN:

Kathy Kohl, *This Side of Paradise*, History Theatre



This Side of Paradise. Photo by Scott Pakudaitis

Continued on page 26 ⟶

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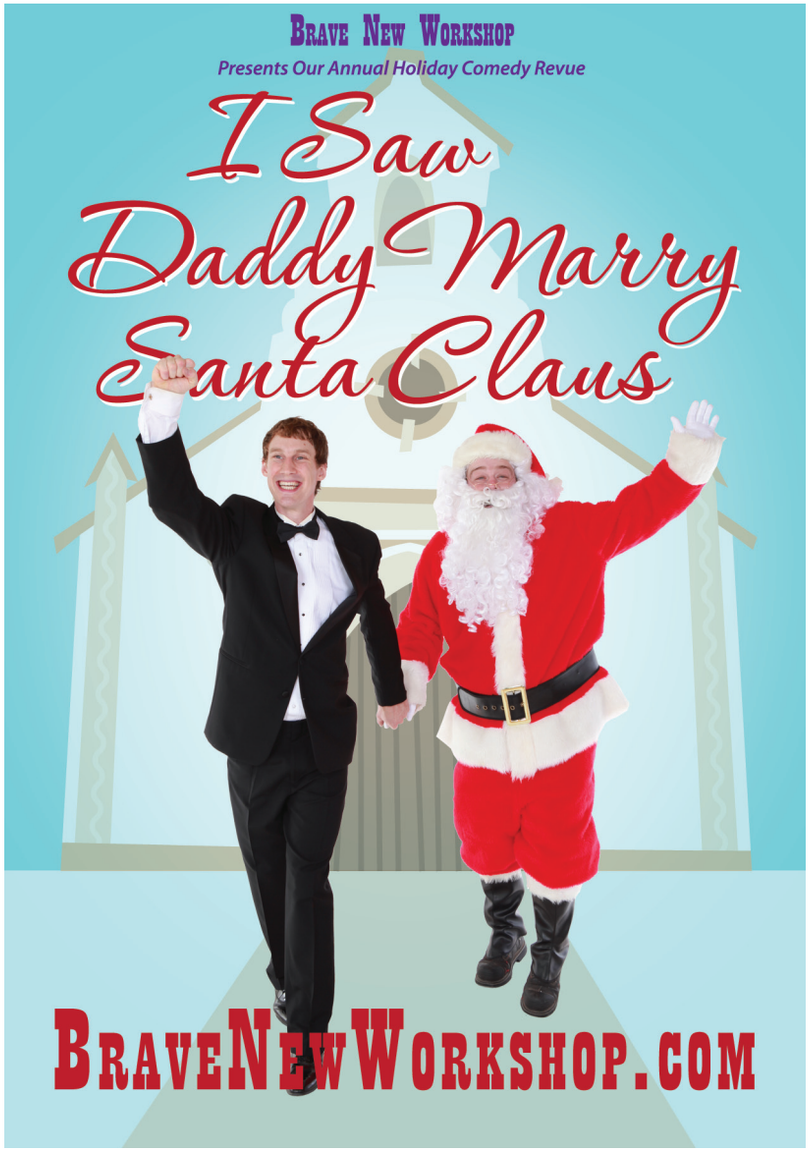
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I Saw Daddy Marry Santa Claus. Photo courtesy of Brave New Workshop

BEST LIGHTING DESIGN:

Daniel Ellis & Adam Vahrenkamp, *Treasure Island*, Theatre-in-the-Round Players

BEST SOUND DESIGN:

Michael Croswell, *Misterman*, Frank Theatre

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE ART:

Queer!, Gadfly Theatre

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN NEW MUSICAL COMEDY:

The Geriatrical Theatrical, Plymouth Playhouse

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN COMEDY REVUE:

I Saw Daddy Marry Santa Claus, Brave New Workshop



Changes in Time. Photo by Rebecca Jean Lawrence Photography

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN NEW PLAYWRITING:

Jennifer Blackmer, *Unraveled*, Theatre Unbound
Ethan Boatner, *Changes in Time*, 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities
Aditi Brennan Kapil, *The Hindu Gods Trilogy*, Mixed Blood Theatre

BREAKTHROUGH IN INTERSEX CHARACTERIZATION/PERFORMANCE:

Aditi Brennan Kapil & Debargo Sanyal, *Brahman/i: A One-Hrija Standup Comedy,* Mixed Blood Theatre



The Hindu Gods Trilogy. Photo by Rich Ryan



Herocycle. Photo by Mike Neuharth

NOTABLE ADAPTATION OF A CLASSIC:

Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Alan Berks & Company at Gremlin Theatre

BEST SHOW FROM OUT OF TOWN:

Ganesh Versus the Third Reich, Australia's Back to Back Theatre at Walker Art Center

BEST PERFORMANCE FROM OUT OF TOWN:

Alex Morf, *War Horse*, National Theatre of Great Britain presented by Orpheum-Hennepin Theatre Trust

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCES:

Muriel Bonertz: *Changes in Time*, 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities
Rebecca Myers Yoho & Kristen Mathisen: *Unraveled*, Theatre Unbound
Bill McCallum & Kathryn Meisle: *Clybourne Park*, Guthrie Theatre
Sara Richardson, Namir Smallwood, Hugh Kennedy: *Buzzer*, Pillsbury House at Guthrie Theatre
Virginia Burke: *Good People*, Park Square Theatre
Casey Hoekstra & Craig Johnson: *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, Walking Shadow Company
Joe Bombard: *The Sexual Life of Savages*, Walking Shadow Company
David Beukema & Eric Knutson: *Camino Real*, Girl Friday Productions
Stephen Yoakam: *An Iliad*, Guthrie Theater
Erik Hoover & Jim Peitzman: *Herocycle*, FTF Works
David Darrow & Michael Booth: *Skiing on Broken Glass*, Guthrie Theatre
Caledonia Wilson: *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, Gremlin Theatre
Anna Sundberg & Peter Christian Hansen: *Venus in Fur*, Jungle Theatre
Danielle Siver, *The Children's Hour*, Sabes Jewish Community Center. □



Craig Johnson & Casey Hoekstra in *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde.* Photo by Dan Norman

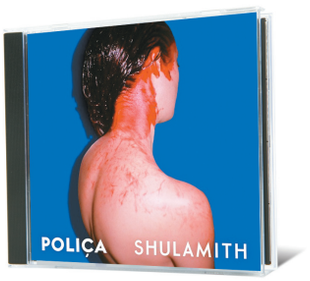


Skiing on Broken Glass. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

YEAR IN REVIEW
2013
ON THE RECORD

BY ED HUYCK

Another year, another collection of terrific music – with plenty of it coming from local shelves. Here are ten of my favorites from 2013:



1. POLIÇA *Shulamith*

It's been a wild couple of years for Poliça, the Twin-Cities group that found success seemingly moments after they formed, issuing a well-regarded debut (*Give You the Ghost*) followed by plenty of national attention. The band's sophomore release finds the group spreading into new sonic territory beyond the moody electronics that dominated their debut. It makes for a heady collection loaded with tunes packed with depth.



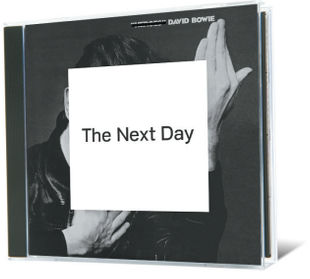
2. SAVAGES *Silence Yourself*

Rock 'n' roll may be struggling at present, but there are still brand-new bands putting up the good fight. London's Savages crafted the most energizing album of the year, referencing decades of punk, post-punk, and indie styles while still offering a fresh sound that can make the most cynical rocker happy.



3. LIZZO *Lizzobangers*

Twin-Cities rapper Lizzo is as hot as they come right now and her debut album finds a young artist packed with confidence and bravado and sporting a vibe that is easily recognizable as the "Twin Cities Sound." She teams up with Doomtree's Lazerbeak here, who provides the kind of tough backing that has made the music from the collective so compelling over the years.



4. DAVID BOWIE *The Next Day*

Bowie takes cues from his classic 1970s sound, down to referencing the cover to *"Heroes"* here. Connecting to the past lifted our favorite musical chameleon to rare late-career heights that embraced nearly half a century of musical exploration.

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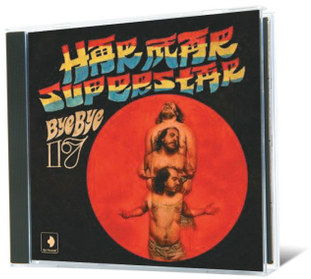
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5. DESSA *Parts of Speech*

Dessa continues to explore the intersection between a myriad of musical styles, employing as much singing as rapping on her tremendous 2013 album. The songs are packed with honesty and driven by a bracing sense of musical exploration.



6. HAR MAR SUPERSTAR *Bye Bye 17*

His latest album finds our favorite Superstar plying the cool side of the '60s and '70s, digging into soul and R&B with pretty joyful results. There's sultry soul ("Lady, You Shot Me") and plenty of tunes that could pack the dance floor in any decade.



7. TAME IMPALA *Lonerism*

Tame Impala moves into rock's heady history to build one of the most beguiling records of the year. These Australians never met a psychedelic groove they didn't like, but the sense of adventure – along with nods along to the way to more modern styles – makes them more than just a tube-amp-using nostalgia act.



8. LOW *The Invisible Way*

There's more to drones with this longstanding (20 years and counting) Duluth-based band. The music is often low key, but the songs themselves are hauntingly beautiful and full of energy and drive, from the soft pop of "Plastic Cup" to the sweep of "On My Own."



9. SIGUR RÓS *Kveikur*

Everybody's favorite obscure Icelandic rockers made a strong return in 2013, issuing a collection of tunes that kept the band firmly in the strange inner space they have inhabited for a decade and a half, while allowing a bit more access for newcomers. No, Kveikur isn't a pop record, but it's more than the soundscapes staying in the mind. It's also the melody.



10. THE JOY FORMIDABLE *Wolf's Law*

Ironic hipsterism and mumblecore hasn't destroyed all outsized emotions, as this Welsh trio proves here, as they wear their epic influences – from Sonic Youth to My Bloody Valentine – on wind-swept sleeves for the likes of "The Ladder is Ours" and "Maw Maw Song."

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YEAR IN REVIEW
2013

THE LAST SLICE

BY JOY SUMMERS

A table set with care, surrounded by friendly faces enveloped in a buzz of laughter: that's the best. There were many dazzling new restaurants on the scene in 2013, but what I'll remember most is what we've shared: It's been an incredible year for the community and the restaurant news pales in comparison.

Here are my Bests of 2013.







Gnocchi king crab; Owner Katie Greeman; Tres leche cake with passion fruit. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

SPILL THE WINE

The most memorable evening of the year had to be a night full of my very best girlfriends. We had gathered at the newly opened Spill the Wine to check out the space. We were enamoured with the room and promptly ordered a whole pile of food – practically one of everything. We were all blowing off steam from a variety of catastrophic personal dramas. We were dealing with a range of awful including: divorce, cancer, death, divorce. You name it, we were in the shit of it. So, we did what the best of friends do in these dire times: we laughed our fool heads off over a smattering of empty plates. The super gooey cheese curds, zesty fried rice, and fire-kissed octopus were long gone.

As we were chatting a strange little bald man wandered up to our table, bent down to one of my friends and whispered, "I'm your worst nightmare," and poured water down the side of her perfectly coiffed hair. We were shocked and confused – and most notably, if you know me – speechless. The restaurant manager sprang into action. The offender was instructed that he needed to leave and it was suggested that perhaps he should consider paying our bill. To this day, we don't know what that was about. Was it that we were too loud? Why not just ask us to STFU? The entire situation was so odd.

The manager was an angel. What could have been a wretched memory was, instead, filled with good food and kindness. (P.S. – Sterling, I see you again? This round is on me.)

Spill the Wine wins the Calm in the Face of Calamity Service Award.

Continued on page 34

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THE BUTTERED TIN

Breakfast is my most vulnerable meal. Whenever I have an early morning meeting, there is a chance that I haven't eaten and even one minor culinary misstep feels like a personal affront. The Buttered Tin embraces me every morning or afternoon when I enter, in a comforting hug. Their food is deceptively simple – perfectly poached eggs that burst a golden yolk which cascades over cornbread and red salsa. Hashbrowns are always extra crispy. The dessert case is packed with treats that dance along the edge of sweetness but are never, ever cloying. One afternoon, after my house was broken into and my laptop, TV, and camera were absconded with, I found solace in a wedge salad. Piled with crispy layers, draped in creamy dressing and studded with garden-fresh tomatoes and fat hunks of bacon, it was exactly what I needed and expected. For further comfort, owner and baker Alicia Hinze gifted me with her chocolate take on a Ho Ho and the chef sent me home with a bag full of vine-ripened tomatoes he'd picked from his yard that morning. Owner Jen Lueck bestowed me with a much-needed hug. What should have been a distressing moment resulted in a resolve to conquer the world.

For their reliably wonderful, elevated breakfast and lunch, **The Buttered Tin wins Best Way to Start Your Day.**











(Clockwise from top left) Wedge Salad; Housemade ricotta with herbs and honey; Chocolate cake; Huevos Rancheros Benedict; Alicia Hinze and Jennifer Lueck. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

Continued on page 36



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THE RABBIT HOLE

The Rabbit Hole is still brand new, but already it's a consistently awesome spot to grab a bite and cocktail with friends. The complementary lighting and snug booths also make for a great date night destination. Their kegged cocktails are quickly delivered and I'm positively smitten with the "Not Doing Jack in the Morning."

Watching Chef Thomas Kim and Kat Melgaard take on this incredible task of opening their second restaurant has been a breathtaking experience. Their restaurant would feel just as at home with a Brooklyn address, but we're lucky to have this in the heart of Minneapolis. The interior design is dazzlingly, crushingly hip. The food is inventive, fun, and just so darn good. The crispy, loaded bacon haemul pajeon "pancake" is packed with fresh scallops and porky goodness, fried until ultra-crunchy, savory, and wondrous.

The talent this duo possesses is astounding. They built and designed this whimsical space themselves. That they did this while they also got married and gave birth to their first child is a stunning display of over-achievement. I had the pleasure of cradling that little angel while her parents worked and I swallowed my awe. They inspire me.

The Rabbit Hole, handily wins the Best Seat at the Cool Kids Table Award.









(Clockwise from top left) Ultra-crispy chicken wings; Spicy gnocchi-like mochi topped with duck confit; Green beans; Confit-cooked potatoes with pesto and parmesan. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

The very best part of this year, however, was the passage of marriage equality. I was at the Capitol the day the day it passed. Those emotions were like nothing else I've ever experienced. My heart swelled and my eyes wouldn't stop filling. As I wandered down the steps, I passed a tomato slice in the shape of a heart. I took it to be a sign. Even discarded food agreed that we are on the right side of history. My heart has been so filled by this community. I'm so thankful that you took the time from your busy life to turn to this page and follow me on my culinary adventures. It's an honor to dine with you and a pleasure to be invited to your table.

All good things must come to an end, though. This is my last Slice column for Lavender. I hope to continue to write here occasionally, at the pleasure of Editor Andy Lien, but my time is up. I see nothing but wonderful things on your horizon. Find me @JoyEstelle on Twitter and food whoring around town – I'm not done eating yet. I will never forget you or our time together. Thank you for joining me for this little slice of time. □

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YEAR IN REVIEW
2013
STORY OF THE YEAR

PRODUCED BY ANDY LIEN, WRITTEN BY SHANE LUECK

MARRIAGE EQUALITY COMES TO MINNESOTA

Without a doubt, the hot topic of 2013 was marriage equality. The early months of the year saw the build-up: debates among legislators, bills proposed, and rallying among citizens. These efforts culminated with marriage equality being signed into law on May 14, 2013. The discussion did not end there, however, it merely changed. No longer was the topic about passing a bill, but rather "What now?" Attention shifted to address what marriage equality looked like for Minnesotans. Our discussion altered to consider the rights, benefits, and protections of same-sex couples under the new law. And, with the historic ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States to strike down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, we are excited to see how more rights as well as marriage equality will be extended to more and more states in the United States.



YEAR IN REVIEW

2013

YEAR IN COVERS

A YEAR RECORDED BY ITS COVERS, HERE ARE ALL 26 LAVENDER COVERS OF 2013.





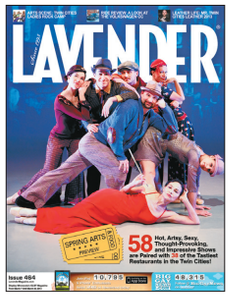








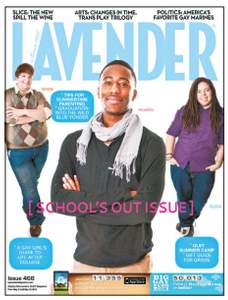


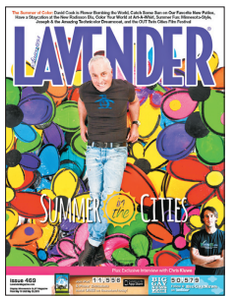






































YEAR IN REVIEW
2013
TOP STORIES

(POPULARITY INDICATED BY TRAFFIC STATISTICS)

1. AMERICA'S FAVORITE GAY MARINES

by Brett Stevens
Issue 468
May 2, 2013
The repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" made headlines across the country. Brett Stevens focused on the emotional story of two marines coming out via YouTube before finding each other and falling in love.



2. 2013 LAVENDER COMMUNITY AWARDS

by Shane Lueck
Issue 479
October 3, 2013
The Lavender Community Awards Issue celebrates those who demonstrate dedication and leadership in working for the advancement of the rainbow community.



3. A CRAFTED AFFAIR

by Alyson Newquist of Bash Collective
Photography by Canary Grey Photography
Issue 481
October 31, 2013
With a backdrop of Bent Paddle Brewing Co. in Duluth, Bash Collective brought us the newest in North Country trends for fall weddings and same-sex fashions for women.



4. SLICE: SPILL THE WINE

by Joy Summers
Issue 468
May 2, 2013
Profiling Katie Greeman's wine bar and restaurant, Spill the Wine, Joy Summers shared everything from the food to the architecture to the poignant history and love story behind the establishment.



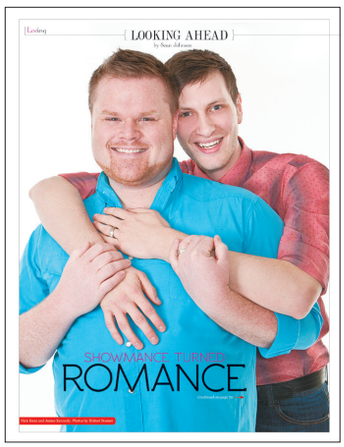
5. TRUE BLUE: DARIN MCDONALD REDEFINES AUTHENTICITY BY BECOMING ST. PAUL'S FIRST GAY COP

by Terrance Griep
Issue 471
June 14, 2013
Grappling with the complexities of identity, Griep profiled Darin McDonald, a gay man who has to "come out" as a cop over and over again. McDonald bridges the divide between the St. Paul Police Department and the GLBT community.



6. SHOWMANCE TURNED ROMANCE

by Sean Johnson
Issue 465
March 21, 2013
Who knew the Bloomington Civic Theatre's production of "The Scarlet Pimpernel" would be the perfect backdrop to launch a new romance? Nick Kunz and James Kennedy met while working on the production and have since begun planning their wedding.



7. HALLOWEEN HOW-TO: SNOW WHITE & PRINCE CHARMING

Written by Brett Dorrian
Photography by Brett Dorrian
Issue 480
October 17, 2013
Featuring Tea Simpson and DJ Shannon Blowtorch as models, Brett Dorrian showed just how easy it is to transform into one of the most iconic couples for Halloween. Snow White and Prince Charming are just a few how-to steps away.





8. WEDDINGS: HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Produced by Julie Lyford for Fabulous Functions
Photography by James Ramsay, Donae Cotton Photography, and HM Photography
Issue 471
June 14, 2013
This same-sex weddings piece in the 2013 Pride Issue presented three couples as their wedding dreams came true at the Van Dusen Mansion. Featuring the products and work of local shops and artists, it offers wedding resources for others planning their events.







9. WEDDING FASHION: REWRITING HISTORY

Produced by Style-Architects
Photography by Photogen, Inc.
Issue 465
March 21, 2013
Spring is a magical time to get married, and these two couples illustrate why that is. The fashion features in Lavender's 2013 Spring Wedding Issue brought in the bright colors and trends sweeping the wedding industry.





10. POLICE CHIEF TO MAKE IT LEGAL

by Pam Colby
Issue 471
June 14, 2013
Janeé Harteau is the first female police chief for Minneapolis and the first openly lesbian police chief in the country. Pam Colby traces Harteau's journey throughout her rewarding career.



YEAR IN REVIEW
2013
TOP ONLINE-ONLY STORIES

(POPULARITY INDICATED BY TRAFFIC STATISTICS)

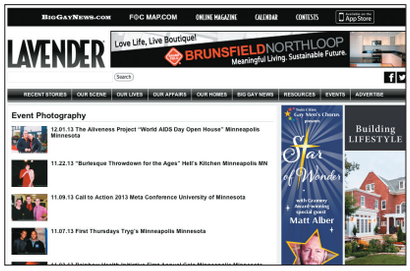
1. BIG GAY NEWS

Culminating the latest in GLBT world news, Big Gay News provides both editorial content and a daily podcast. This global news source has a Twitter following of nearly 60,000. Find your Big Gay News at @biggaynews.



2. EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY

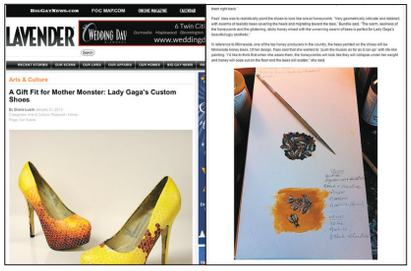
Moving swiftly, *Lavender* makes the rounds to a remarkable number of GLBT events in the Twin Cities. Uploaded online shortly after, event photography continues to be a highlight of *Lavender*'s online presence.



3. A GIFT FIT FOR MOTHER MONSTER: LADY GAGA'S CUSTOM SHOES

by Shane Lueck
January 31, 2013

Last February, Lady Gaga made a comeback to the Midwest with her Born This Way Ball tour. The hot topic of her arrival? Her hand-painted beehive themed pumps given as a gift by the Xcel Energy Center.



4. BURLESQUE GIVES BACK

by Shane Lueck
November 12, 2013

After only a week online, the article discussing Black Hearts Burlesque's charitable performances shot up the pageview charts, making it one of the top viewed in a matter of days.



5. FOOD IS FASHION AND MINNEAPOLIS IS SO HOT RIGHT NOW

by Keane Amdahl
January 14, 2013

What's so great about Minneapolis? Amdahl's piece summarizing the accolades given to the city's restaurants by national news publications garnered its fair share of Minneapolis pride.



Each year the Minnesota Magazine Publishing Association (MMPA) presents its Excellence Awards, recognizing outstanding publishing achievements. The awards include dozens of categories in the areas of editorial, design, marketing, digital publishing, and overall excellence. All entries for this year's awards have a cover date between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013. Winners were announced at the annual awards gala held this year on November 7. *Lavender* is proud to present its eight MMPA Excellence Award winners this year.

YEAR IN REVIEW • 2013 •

BEST OF LAVENDER



GOLD – REGULAR COLUMN

"Skirting the Issues" by Ellen Krug

For Ellen Krug, her *Lavender* column "Skirting the Issues" is just one avenue to share a point of view. Between her winning column with *Lavender*, a monthly column for an Iowa LGBT publication, and a book, Krug has published nearly 200,000 words since early 2010. "This is the first time any of my writing has received professional recognition, and thus, that makes the award extra special," says Krug, whose intention with her column is to demonstrate that transgender people really are like everyone else. "My goal is to simply be a writer–hopefully a fairly good one–who happens to be a transwoman, who writes about how she interacts with the world."



BRONZE – REGULAR COLUMN

"Slice" by Joy Summers

Each issue, Joy Summers brings to readers whatever is new and fresh in the world of food in her column, "Slice." Her commitment to bring readers along on her culinary journey earned her column the MMPA bronze award in the "Regular Column" category for the second year in a row. Prior to being notified, Summers had been under the impression that only one piece had been submitted for consideration, not her entire column. "I'm proud and humbled to have been recognized," Summers says. "I'm proud of my time with *Lavender*. The award is just gravy on a mountain of goodness."



BRONZE – FEATURE ARTICLE

"Senior Living: Aging with Dignity, Aging with Care" by Kathleen Watson
Issue 457
November 29, 2012

"I am very interested in the country's current conversation about aging," Watson says. "My goal was to help our GLBT community become more aware of the assistance options available in the Twin Cities. All people deserve to be treated with dignity, and GLBT people deserve to be respected and properly cared for in their later years." Writing this piece allowed Watson to share her passion and focus her attention on what she called "a valuable group within our community."



GOLD – FROM THE EDITOR

"Of Empathy and Our Future" by Andy Lien
Issue 469
May 16, 2013

At the height of Minnesota's fight for marriage equality, many people in the GLBT and ally community looked to *Lavender* to take a stand. During this period, Andy Lien's letters from the editor often summed up and tried to move points forward in the community. "As the person who pulls together content, it was a big boost to my self-esteem to be awarded for content that I penned," Lien says. "To be recognized for the piece I wrote about empathy toward the end of the fight is a particularly satisfying way to close that era of challenges and triumphs."



SILVER – PROFILE ARTICLE

"2012 Organization of the Year: Minnesotans United for All Families" by Andy Lien
Issue 458
December 13, 2012

Lavender's coverage of the fight against Minnesota's marriage amendment last year was around-the-clock. Being that the people of Minnesota were the ones with the power to decide the fate of that amendment, *Lavender*'s staff strived to cover as much of the fight as possible because of the direct effect that *Lavender* could have in the campaign. Andy Lien's profile of the organization that played a massive role in that battle, won a silver MMPA award. Lien says, "To win an award for profiling Minnesotans United for All Families and the victory of the defeat was the culmination of the *Lavender* staff's attention and dedication to the issue and our photography that documented the campaign from start to finish."



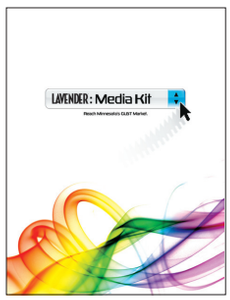
SILVER – COVER DESIGN

2013 Spring Wedding Issue
Issue 465
March 21, 2013



SILVER – FEATURE DESIGN

Spring Arts & Food Preview
Issue 464
March 7, 2013



GOLD – MEDIA KIT

Legendary Chi Chi LaRue Bringing Back Holiday Tradition

After a hiatus of several years, the legendary Chi Chi LaRue is bringing back what was an annual holiday tradition in the Twin Cities: her XXXmas extravaganza. Presiding over the event as DJ on December 21 at the Bolt Underground in Minneapolis, she's coming with porn superstars Paul Steele, Tony Orion, and Aleks Buldocek.

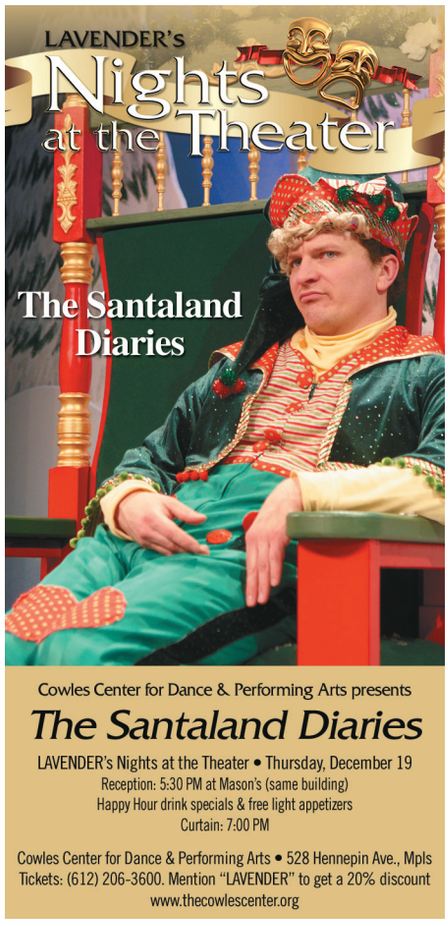
A native of Hibbing, Minnesota, LaRue launched her career as a popular female impersonator in the Twin Cities in the late 1970s before moving to Los Angeles in 1986. She now is celebrating 25 years of being the world's most famous gay adult video director, having helmed hundreds of productions. LaRue's C1R (Channel 1 Releasing) is the largest gay adult video company worldwide. Her third and later incarnation is as an internationally much-in-demand DJ. *Out* Magazine has named LaRue one of its Top 50 "Most Powerful Gay Men and Women in America."

Be there early for Chi Chi LaRue's XXXmas, as the cover is only $5 before 10 PM ($7 after), and it undoubtedly will attract a capacity crowd! □

Chi Chi LaRue's XXXmas
Dec. 21
Bolt Underground
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BAR SHOWCASE | photos by George Holdgrafer

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MR. MINNEAPOLIS EAGLE 2014

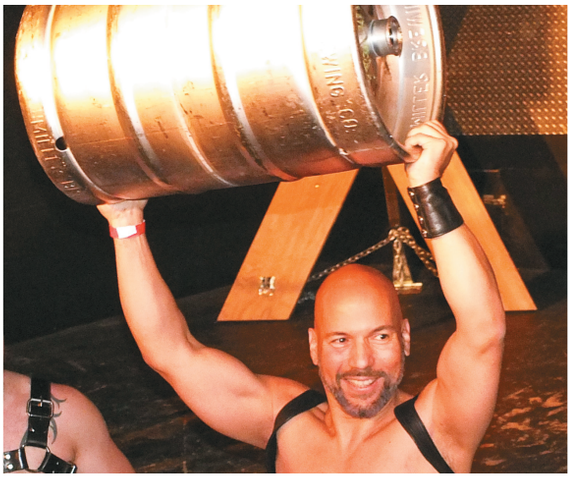
Jason Little captured the sash at the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2014 contest, which took place at the Minneapolis Eagle complex Nov. 15-17. This year's Mr. Minneapolis Eagle contest was the largest and best-attended in the event's history and attracted an unprecedented number of out-of-town visitors.

The weekend started with a Greet-the-Meat party Friday evening in the Minneapolis Eagle. On Saturday afternoon the contestants had their private interviews with the judges, while other weekend attendees enjoyed a Kink U session discussing "Kink on a Budget."

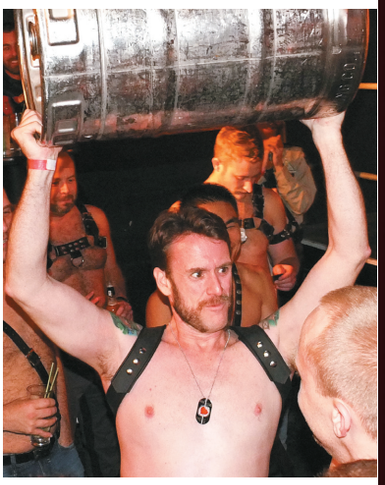
As Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2014, Jason Little will represent The Minneapolis Eagle and Minnesota's leather community in the 35th annual International Mr. Leather competition (www.imrl.com), May 23-26, 2014 (Memorial Day weekend) in Chicago.



The contestants in the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2014 contest. Left to right: Ivan E. Nuñez, Jason Little (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2014), Tim Hotchkin (first runner-up) and Bernd Geels. Photos by Steve Lenius.



Ivan E. Nuñez during the contest's traditional Keg Walk segment.



Tim Hotchkin during the Keg Walk.



Bernd Geels during the Question-and-Answer portion of the contest.



Seen at the pre-contest party are three out-of-town guest judges for this year's contest. Left to right are Andy Cross (Mr. San Francisco Leather 2013 and International Mr. Leather 2013); Nick Zuko (Mr. Chicago Leather 2013); and Thib Guicherd-Callin (Mr. Santa Clara County Leather 2012 and first runner-up for International Mr. Leather 2013). Other judges were Daddy Don (International Puppy Trainer 2012); Derek Harley (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2012); Ryan Brown (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2013); Tommy Rosengren; and Lady Carol.



Jason Little, the new Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2014, waves to the crowd..

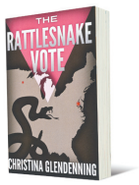

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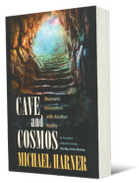
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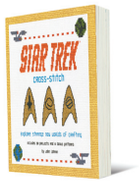
RATTLESNAKE VOTE
Christina Glendenning
God's Mop
$14.95
Glendenning's first novel is disturbingly enjoyable, a real thriller. Starting with the inexplicable and brutal murder of an elderly, beloved woman, homophobic Minneapolis homicide detective S(amuel) d'Aries Reese and his partner begin to pick up the pieces. Nothing seems to have been stolen, but her Bible contains homoerotic photos. The plot revolves around the issues of gay rights, blackmail of politicians by male prostitutes to garner votes–not money. D'Aries is a conflicted man, stirred by his racial and cultural background, his love for his little daughter, and a yearning for beauty–his avocation is rosemaling. How will he handle a young–and lovely–transgender youth, a conniving politician's wife, and his struggles with the bottle? Glendenning deftly handles plot, dialogue and the complicated stew that constitutes human relationships.



PAPAL BULL: AN EX-CATHOLIC CALLS OUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
Dr. Joe Wenke
Transüber
$9.99
If you enjoyed Wenke's take on the Bible, *You Got to Be Kidding!* (Books 471), read his exegesis of the Catholic Church's past two thousand years. Born eldest of eleven siblings to strict Catholic parents in South Philadelphia, the young Wenke endured the tender ministrations of the nuns in grade and high school, and then went on to college at Notre Dame. Mordantly funny, scrupulously researched (bibliography and list of websites appended), Wenke lets history and the clergy themselves prove his points. Although praising many good works, Wenke scours territory between Original Sin and Hell asking questions. For example: Why was Sister Margaret McBride excommunicated for advising abortion for a pregnant woman whose life was endangered, while known predator priests remain Catholics in good standing?



CAVE AND COSMOS: SHAMANIC ENCOUNTERS WITH ANOTHER REALITY
Michael Harner
North Atlantic Books
$19.95
The long-awaited sequel to Harner's 1980 *The Way of the Shaman, Cave and Cosmos* addresses an audience more aware of and experienced in shamanic techniques. A trained anthropologist, Harner lived among indigenous shamans in numerous cultures, distilling central practices into what he termed Core Shamanism. Basic and Advanced courses are taught in the Foundation for Shamanic Studies in Mill Valley, California, and through trained instructors in workshops throughout the United States and abroad. Harner believes that shamanic healing techniques are accessible to everyone, and both books describe the methods by which one can journey to what he calls non-ordinary reality to bring back healing to our ordinary world. For those who want to know more about shamanism–or just what shamanic practice is and entails.



STAR TREK CROSS STITCH
John Lohnan
Gallery Books
$19.99



STAR TREK CRAFT BOOK
Angie Pedersen
Gallery Books
$19.99

A *Trek*-a-palooza that will keep you busy throughout the long winter months. Pedersen covers a wide range of projects from a Mr. Spock Sock Monkey, a Klingon Serving Tray, a Vulcan Hat, Comic Book Low-Top Sneakers, and a Khan Finger Puppet. There's a glossary of terms and techniques. Lohnan also offers a wealth of Trek lore throughout his "Strange new worlds of crafting." Along with the familiar "Beam Me Up, Scotty!" motif, he offers patterns for creating a Federation Seal, a Captains of Star trek hand towel and a "He's Dead, Jim…" motif, highly suitable for framing and presentation. (Lohnan reminds us that Dr. McCoy uttered this memorable line some twenty times in the original *Star Trek*.) Buy them, use them and "Make it so!" □









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Walking the Talk:
Local Churches Embrace New Ministers

GLBT Christians in the Twin Cities area will discover that many churches are opening their doors to our community like never before. Recently, three large congregations have called openly gay men to serve as their senior ministers. Together they share a message of hope and healing.

Pastor Bradley Schmeling

Pastor Bradley Schmeling was raised in the Lutheran faith in Cincinnati, Ohio. His early years included college, the seminary and a traditional marriage.

He was serving his first congregation when the gay feelings that he had been suppressing since adolescence resurfaced. He came out to his wife and to his congregation. Schmeling recalls, "There was a lot of pain in ending the marriage, but at the same time I was coming out and so much of me was coming alive. I was living with a kind of honesty and integrity that I hadn't lived with before."

It was the early 1990's and he was connecting with the larger gay community and making friends. "People said that my preaching got so much better. I think it was because I understood the story more profoundly. Dying to one way of life and being raised up to a new one," remembers Schmeling.

He decided to leave parish ministry and attend graduate school at Emory University in Atlanta. Eventually, he was encouraged to apply for a post at St. John's Lutheran Church in Atlanta. "I was totally out through that entire interview process, so when the congregation called me, there were no surprises. I was single, so technically I was within the guidelines of the church," recounts Schmeling.



Pastor Bradley Schmeling. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

In 2004, he met his partner Darin Easier, also a Lutheran minister, at a church conference in Minneapolis. By 2005, they were in a relationship. He shared the news with his congregation; they threw a party to celebrate. His Bishop began the process of initiating formal disciplinary charges against him, asking him to resign. He decided to stay.

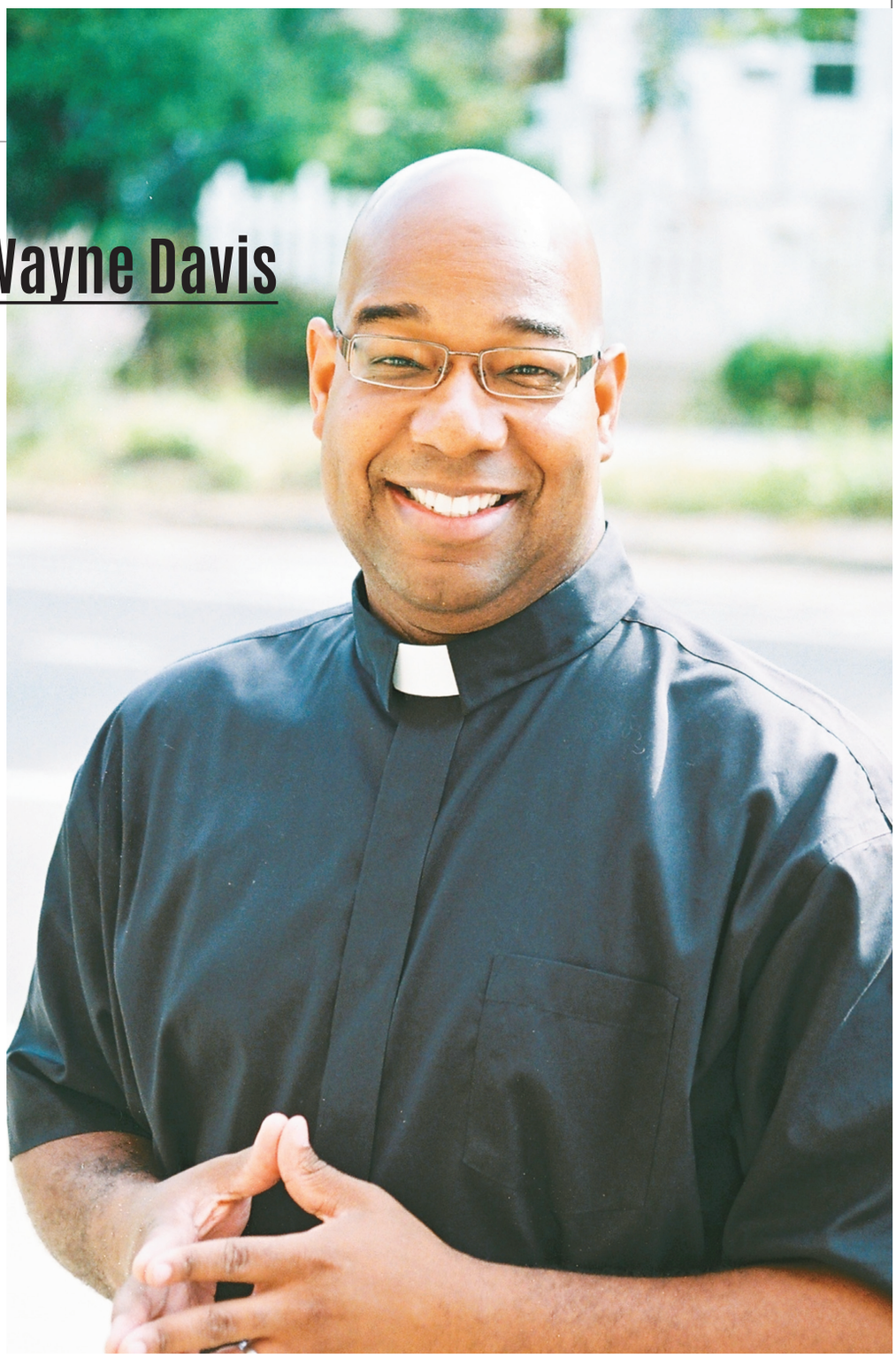
Schmeling was put on trial in January 2007; that summer he was removed from the clergy roster. The trial made national headlines. Lutherans began to think about homosexuality and the church. Was it right to remove a pastor from a congregation that is happy and doing well?

The trial moved the church faster and further along. In 2009, the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA approved a resolution to open the ministry to gay and lesbian pastors living in a committed relationship. Schmeling was reinstated.

In 2012, he accepted the call to serve as senior pastor at St. Paul's largest ELCA church, Gloria Dei. Schmeling explains, "I felt drawn to their mission and ministry. Twenty-five years ago, it was the largest Lutheran congregation to call a woman as a senior pastor and Martin Luther King preached there in the 1960s."

He believes his own experience of being marginalized by the church makes him more sensitive to those who continue to be excluded. Schmeling states, "There's a lot of work yet to do. Bullying continues to be a huge issue in schools, in sports, even in business. The church has got to be a voice that challenges bullying. The church has yet to fully deal with its transgender members. I think the mission of the church is always to be crossing new boundaries and to be breaking down walls that continue to exist."

The Reverend DeWayne Davis



The Reverend DeWayne Davis. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

The Reverend DeWayne Davis

The Reverend DeWayne Davis was born into a loving faith-based family in Mississippi. His father was an evangelist preacher. The church held a central place in daily life. He remembers clearly in middle school when he felt the spirit of the Lord fill him up, an experience he describes as physical and powerful. "I was in church and something very special happened," Davis reflects.

It was also about this time that his middle school put on a production of the play, *Gypsy*. An experience that would offer another enlightened revelation. "I was a chorus boy and there was another boy in that chorus and we fell in love," Davis recalls.

He graduated from High School in 1989, and left Mississippi for Howard University in Washington, D.C. It was there that he met his soul mate and future husband, Kareem Murphy. It was this relationship that spurred him on to telling his parents that he was gay. Davis recalls, "This was a low point for me spiritually, my father wanted to use what I call the language of oppression, rather than the language of understanding. He used phrases like, 'perverted demon' to describe what was going on with me. I call it, 'spiritual malpractice.' It is not a theology of healing. It was a hurtful and scary time."

During this time of separation from his family, he felt alienated from organized religion. Neither state would last long. As his parents began to see that they might miss out on a relationship with their son, they began to reach out and gradually fences were mended.

After college, Davis took a job as a staffer on Capitol Hill. He was out about his sexual orientation and found acceptance from the politicians as well as the other staffers.

It was during this time that he and Kareem began to search for a spiritual home. They soon found it at their local Metropolitan Community Church (MCC). A Christian denomination known as the world's first church group with a primary ministry directed to GLBT persons. This would open the door for Davis and lead him back to his spiritual calling. After some hesitation he would follow his heart and join the seminary.

He was ordained and serving a church in Northern Virginia when the recent Minneapolis call came from All God's Children Metropolitan Community Church. He applied and was offered the ministry. In making the decision to move his husband Kareem didn't hesitate, Davis's voice breaks with emotion as he shares Kareem's words, "Of course we'll do it." They purchased a house in north Minneapolis and moved last August. Davis adds with a laugh that they insisted that the house have a new furnace put in.

Reverend Davis is very excited about his current church and the work they are doing. "As more churches become affirming of GLBT people, we can be nimble and move to meet the needs in our community and to battle what we call systems of oppression, such as poverty and incarceration issues. Our work is about liberation from oppression and social justice. We have the freedom to come together and say that anybody can preach the Gospel, despite one's gender or sexual orientation. That is the theology of liberation," Davis concludes.

Continued on page 52



The Reverend Daniel Vigilante

The Reverend Daniel Vigilante. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

The Reverend Daniel Vigilante

The Reverend Daniel Vigilante was raised with three older brothers in Morristown, New Jersey. The family members were active members at their local Presbyterian Church. Of the brothers, he liked church the best. He adds with a laugh that it is still true today.

Like many other gay kids, he knew that he was different. Vigilante recalls, "I would say by middle school I started to really think about my feelings and that they were not a phase. It was around the same time that I started to feel a call to the ministry. I guess the two go hand-in-hand for my journey."

He graduated from high school in 1995. Once in college he told his family and friends that he was gay. "I was very blessed. I heard nothing but affirmation and love from my parents, my brothers and my friends. I've never lost a relationship because of coming out. I'm very lucky," Vigilante reflects.

He went on to complete his seminary studies, but withdrew his name from the ordination process. The church wasn't allowing openly gay people to be ordained. At the same time, there was a lot of work taking place to try and change the constitution. He believed that real change doesn't happen from the outside, so he stuck with the church. He felt the need to be an example for people. He found a church in California that was willing to call him as an associate pastor, though not ordained as one.

In 2011, in a monumental move, the Presbyterian Constitution was changed allowing the ordination of gays and lesbians. Soon after that Vigilante was told about a position at Grace-Trinity Community Church in Minneapolis. He was interested, leading him to restart his ordination process, he found the exam particularly challenging. "I had to study a lot more. I hadn't taken Hebrew or Greek in like nine years, so you forget a lot of that. Fortunately, I passed them all," Vigilante recalls.

In 2012, he assumed the senior minister position at Grace-Trinity Community Church, located in the Uptown area of Minneapolis. Vigilante has found the congregation to be very progressive. Thus far, he is loving Minneapolis, "There is so much going on, so many people from different backgrounds. Our church is finding her niche. Many of the people who come to us are younger. They are looking for a place, other than the bars, to meet people and make friends. We have a really cool opportunity to reach out and to serve as community for them," Vigilante explains.

He believes that the church has a lot of relationships to repair. "There are some very forward-thinking, inclusive, and compassionate people who have welcomed GLBT people into the church for decades, for whom this was never an issue," Vigilante states. He regrets that often the larger Christian message, particularly on the television news, is that of exclusion. He adds, "The church has a lot of work to do to repair relationships with those who have been hurt, wounded and alienated by that message."

Continued on page 54

Advent and Christmas at Mayflower United Church of Christ

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th
8:30am — Worship Service — Dr. David Rayson
11:00am — Worship led by Children & Youth
6:30pm — *Acoustic Christmas*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22th
8:30am and 11:00am Services with
Mayflower Choir with Copper Street Brass
9:45am — Christmas Caroling led by Marty Haugen

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24th
Christmas Eve Services
5:00pm — Intergenerational "I Remember" Service
7:30pm — Contemplative Communion Service
11:00pm — Lessons and Carols – Mayflower Choir

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29th
11:00am only — Worship Service
Rev. Emily Goldthwaite Fries

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Christmas Eve
4:45 p.m. Family Service
7:45 (ASL) & 10:45 p.m.
Candlelight Services
with lessons and carols

Organist Philip Brunelle;
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Christmas Eve — Tuesday, December 24
4:00 p.m. - Twilight Service of Blessing
10:30 p.m. - Candlelight Holy Communion

Christmas Day — Wednesday, December 25
10:00 a.m. - Christmas Holy Communion

Central Lutheran Church
12th Street at 3rd Avenue
Downtown Minneapolis
612.870.4416 centralmpls.org

All are Welcome!

Today, an increasing number of Christian faith communities are defining themselves as "reconciling congregations." This means that they are welcoming and affirming to GLBT people. One noteworthy congregation, Light of the World Lutheran Church in Farmington, recently put out a press release entitled, "ALL Are Welcome Here- No Exceptions." One line on the lengthy list of those welcome reads, "If you are male or female or transgender…"

Another development on the Christian ministry front is Jay Bakker. You may remember him as the son of television evangelist Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. The young Bakker has ditched the hateful messages of his parents and brought his Revolution Church from New York to Minneapolis. The church adopts a philosophy that God is a loving and accepting entity rather than a judgmental one. His ministry is very inclusive of GLBT people and known to have celebrated marriage equality in Minnesota with rainbow-colored communion bread.

In South Minneapolis, Walker Methodist Church remains a historic stalwart for the community. The Church first embraced GLBT folks as a reconciling congregation in 1988. There were many tears and social media posts in June of 2012, when a lightning strike burned the church to the ground. The only thing that remained among the ashes was the church's rainbow flag. The congregation is now completing the building of a new church on the same site. In 1968 Walker's minister Bryan Peterson wrote, "Justice has never arrived, but is always just beginning to emerge, just as love cannot be a past event, but must be continually acted out in the world." □



Sunday Worship 10:30am Weekly
Blue Christmas Service December 14, 3:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Services:
"Christmas at Grandma's", 4:00 p.m.
Traditional Service, 9:45 p.m.

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Celebrate Christmas!

Wednesday, December 18
Advent Vespers: Holden Evening Prayer • 7:00 pm

Thursday, December 19
The Edina Coalition for Grief Support's
Holiday Service of Remembrance • 4:30 pm

Sunday, December 22
Advent Worship Service • 8:15 & 11:00 am

Tuesday, December 24 • Christmas Eve
Child-Friendly Service • 4:00 pm
Candlelight Services • 5:30 & 11:00 pm

Wednesday, December 25 • Christmas Day
Worship Service • 10:00 am

Sunday, December 29
Worship Service • 8:15 & 11:00 am



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952.926.3808 • www.eclc.org

Awaken to Amazement
Christmas Eve at Hennepin



12:00 Noon – Chapel Communion
2:00 PM – Labyrinth Service
4:00 PM – Family Service/Pageant
10:30 PM – Prelude Concert
11:00 PM – Candlelight Service

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HennepinChurch.org

Richfield United Methodist Church

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Each Sunday in Advent
Worship Services at 9:00 am & 11:00 am

Christmas Eve Worship
Tuesday, December 24

4:00 pm Family Friendly Candlelight Service

11:00 pm Candlelight Service

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612-861-6086
richfieldumc.org

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
A Covenant Network Congregation



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Candlelight Services at 8:00pm & 10:00pm

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Cadillac ATS. Photo by Randy Stern

VEHICLE OF THE YEAR

It is with great honor and privilege for the first time in *Lavender* magazine to announce that the 2013 Victory & Reseda Vehicle of The Year Award will go to the Cadillac ATS.

The "what" award? How does this fit with Lavender? And, who am I to be given print space to announce this on here? I know it is the year-end edition, but, frankly…

To explain, a bit of context is needed here. There is a saying amongst automotive journalists: "How many car awards could there be?"

There is quite a lot of them – with their own pecking order. First amongst equals in the U.S.A. is *Motor Trend*'s Car of The Year. The award has been around the longest and has created some of the biggest arguments amongst fellow journalists and enthusiasts. Amongst the winners were some curious nods, despite the magazine's own extensive evaluation process.

Each publication, website, media association, organization and some panel of judges offers their own crowns to worthy vehicles. Some vehicles would walk away with dozens of awards from varying groups.

The truth is that the automotive manufacturers love awards. No matter the size, importance or reason, a nod for being the "best of" helps the business of selling their wares. It is very easy and gratifying to say: "Your vehicle is the best – congratulations!"

Seven years ago, I had a blog that offered my own take on the automobile. It was where I began honing the work you have seen in these pages for the past few years. On a whim, I decided to create my own award for the best automobile of the year. I figured: "how hard could it be?" I just evaluate each vehicle driven and pick the best. No…I needed more. How about a public vote? Brilliant!

Every year, this formula has grown and taken a life of its own. Social media helped tremendously through Twitter engagement and a nervous moment at the 2012 Chicago

Auto Show where I handed off the plaque of the 2011 Victory & Reseda Vehicle of The Year award to the head of marketing at Buick. From there, the award – simply called the VOTY – became one of the most influential social media-based automotive awards around.

This year's VOTY has never been so exciting to work on. You are reading about it here – a huge step since I never thought would be able to see it in print or widely distributed as this magazine. The process has tightened, which made for some interesting twists and turns in the evaluation and scoring process.

How does the VOTY work? To qualify, a vehicle must be reviewed in Victory & Reseda (and *Lavender*) within a year's timeframe for the full evaluation period allowed. Usually, those vehicle subjects are evaluated for a week at a time. Every vehicle goes through a scoring process based on several criteria: Specification, fuel consumption, value, exterior design, interior comfort and ergonomics, driving dynamics, and overall performance.

It does sound like almost every automotive award, yet, the VOTY is based in social media where engagement is the key. Engagement is measured by impressions on various social media channels and the website. Even feedback on Lavender is included in the scoring. Then, I bring in a panel made up of fellow automotive writers, enthusiasts and fans of the site. They get to pick one vehicle they think is worthy of the VOTY. It brings a mix of expertise giving context to the idea of engagement.

The last step is to take the five best scores amongst all of the candidates and put them to a vote. Using the popular survey engine, SurveyMonkey.com, the public vote offers these five finalists a chance for everyone to make their choice. A final tabulation of votes and scores will yield the VOTY for the year.

The winning manufacturer is notified, the award is made and a time is set to hand it off at the following Chicago Auto Show.

Every year yields a story as to which vehicle earned the title of VOTY. In 2009, the Buick LaCrosse won because it represented the direction the brand was going in the aftermath of General Motors' bankruptcy. The Hyundai Sonata won twice – 2007 and 2010 – since it represented where the Korean automaker is going in North America. Last year's winner, the Dodge Dart, was the first Chrysler product guided by Fiat as built on one of the Italian firm's platforms.

What story will this year's VOTY tell for us?

For years, Cadillac had been trying to get their "small" car right. At the time of the first Seville, using the same platform as the Chevrolet Nova was the best choice to create an American classic that met the challenge of the Mercedes-Benz S-Class of the day. Since then, Cadillac had good intentions on creating a "small" model – with not-so-great results.

The motivation for the ATS came from the best selling premium car in the market – the BMW 3-Series. Where the Germans and Japanese would only master the smaller sports-premium sedan formula, General Motors knew it had to meet and beat the leader. Through extensive testing, the ATS conquered everywhere it needed to be – the Nurburgring, the Atlas Mountains and so forth.

The ATS was also tested in the Twin Cities, a bit of South Central Minnesota and a smidgen of Chicago. Driving the ATS revealed Cadillac's intentions were on point with its ambitions. It is a direct challenge to the 3-Series with its own spins on style, luxury and performance.

In terms of performance, the 2.0liter turbocharged four-cylinder and the 3.6liter V6 were driven – both equipped with all-wheel drive. Between these two engines is a world-class sports sedan with superb handling and grand performance. The Cadillac's review in *Lavender* made this abundantly clear: "The ATS is a poised machine designed for enthusiastic driving or a good ride home from a long journey."

As the Cadillac CUE (Cadillac User Experience) technology continues to improve, it serves as a technological centerpiece for a cabin that is the best in its class. The point of the chrome, switchable screens and CUE is to make things easier to use than its rivals and to befit the image of Cadillac as a distinctive American luxury brand for the world. The driver is rewarded with a place where luxury and performance meet behind the wheel.

The targets were clear – GM and Cadillac nailed them dead on. Their audaciousness in its marketing was indeed backed up with a car that has again redefined this 110-year old brand. Prior to this VOTY, the ATS was awarded the North American Car of The Year back in January, along with other accolades to prove its worth as a new leader in this segment.

Our summary describes this year's VOTY well: "The ATS is a damn good sports sedan."

The ATS won on strong evaluative scores across the board. It also won on strong engagement from social media and the readership, along with a panel selection. However, the online polling drove the ATS's victory home half of the percentage of votes collected for this award.

Lavender magazine joins Victory & Reseda in congratulating General Motors on their third VOTY since 2009. This is Cadillac's first amongst the three – the other two awarded to Buick. □







Cadillac ATS. Photos by Randy Stern



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2013

Honestly, I'm not particularly crazy about year-end retrospectives. Invariably, I focus only on what I didn't accomplish. In the end, I'm simply reminded that the big old clock I carry around in my head is sounding tic toc, tic toc, feeding my neuroses.

Oh, what the hell. Here's my stab at looking back at 2013.

Worst Hair Moment: You've got that right—I'm going to start out with my hair. No vanity here.

I have this problem with flat hair—my mane is so incredibly fine that it won't hold body. I was acutely reminded of this in April, when I appeared on Bi-Cities TV, where I read from my memoir and talked about living as transgender. Despite a good half can of hair spray and enough teasing to give anyone carpal tunnel, I showed up with hair hanging limp like some old wrinkled—wait a minute, I'll let you conjure up your own noun. Throw in awful lighting and my man-voice, and there's no way I'd ever want anyone to see that interview.

Alas, if you search, "Ellen Krug," the interview is the second or third link to come up.

Damn Google.

Best Moment: Hmm, let me see. There was a wonderful book launch, an interview with Public Radio, multiple presentations—some to standing ovations, and a degree of notoriety.

However, apart from feeding my ego, none of that qualifies as "best moment."

Instead, it's all about my bike, the White Knight, which I've shared before. I feel the greatest freedom pedaling down the Greenway at five in the morning as darkness transitions to light and crickets give way to songbirds.

On a beautiful July dawn, I rounded a curve at the east end of the Greenway near the Martin Olav Sabo bridge just as the first rays of sunlight appeared. They caught the night's mist just right, and I was treated to a magical display of water particles dancing in air.

It took my breath away! So much that I hope that's the last thing I think of on my deathbed.

Yup, there's me being neurotic again.

Honorable Mention for Best Moment: Riding back from Ecolab Plaza on the night the Legislature approved the marriage bill, I saw the Guthrie smokestacks decked out in rainbow colors. How utterly brilliant!

Worst Act of Cowardice: On a January morning, I sat with the executive committee of my nonprofit at the Nicollet Inn restaurant. The occasion?

My very first job performance review.

At one point, someone looked out the window and exclaimed, "Oh, that must have hurt!"

I turned around and saw a man, probably sixty years old, plumped down on the icy sidewalk. His glasses were askew, there was blood around his nose, and he appeared dazed following a fall.

My natural compassionate inclination was to get up from the meeting and go to him.

The other three people with me simply sat and continued with my review, which at that moment wasn't going so well.

I feared what my bosses would think if I interrupted the meeting to assist the fallen man, and so I just sat there. Eventually, the man got up and hobbled away.

Cowardice. I've vowed to never again idly sit by while another human suffers.

Best Conversation: In October, my daughter, Lily, texted *Can I come over and can we sit on your bed and talk?*

Lily's a senior at Augsburg College. She was having boy issues, and as well wanted to vetch about classes and her fast food job. My bed is our talking-place.

We sat side-by-side propped on pillows for an hour and a half. I listened open-minded and shared what little wisdom I own. Lily was very appreciative, and in the end, she told me that she was proud of me for living authentically. I said the same to her.

It was my best conversation of the year, hands down.

Most Unexpected Act of Kindness: I stayed at a Provincetown bed and breakfast in early September. On my first night there, I received a very hurtful email from someone incredibly important in my former man-life.

I shared this with Daniel, the innkeeper. Quite unexpectedly, he asked if I could use a hug.

Seconds later, I found myself wrapped in the arms of a wonderfully kind person.

Wow.

That's all I've got. Here's to a great 2014! □

Ellie Krug is the author of *Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change*. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com

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"What human being would ever take that route, you idiot!" she yells as she angrily punches the keyboard with her fingers.

Google Maps does not answer. It simply continues to highlight the route. In red! Just to make her more angry. Google Maps is a bastard.

Attracted by the commotion, our highly excitable miniature Schnauzers jump on top of her and join her in batting at the computer. This just makes her more furious because she does not like to have any interaction with carbon-based lifeforms when she is arguing with a robot.

And then I make the mistake of speaking.

"I thought robots were designed to serve us. To meet our needs and make our lives easier," I say. "But they only seem to irritate you."

"Oh, shut up!" she says to me, the dogs, and the computer. She gets out of bed and storms into the living room, taking only one of us with her—the computer.

Now, I love computers and the robots they command. Computers allow me to easily stalk old girlfriends when I'm drunk! And I adore that robot vacuum that scoots around your hardwood floors. It's like a spaceship whose alien inhabitants are bent on collecting your fingernails, bits of food and pet hair. I imagine the vacuums eventually returning to their home planet and creating a master race of dog/cat/food scrap hybrids with very long claws.

As I lie in bed, I hear a noise emanating from the living room that indicates that my girlfriend has changed her tactics. Instead of screaming insults, she's now attempting to cajole the computer by issuing a steady stream of hushed curse words in a singsong tone. It sounds like a lullaby in a nursery in hell.

I remember when Sunday mornings used to mean lazy hours in bed—reading the newspaper, having sex, and listening to jazz. Now, as soon as we wake, we flip on our laptops, sucking in the artificial glow from their screens as if it was our life force.

As I wallow in the sentimentality of my happy years as a luddite, I remember that my computer overlord has a program that allows me to access every obscure vocal jazz song ever recorded! I click onto my Spotify application and type in Billie Holiday. Hundreds of recordings magically appear.

Do I miss the wonderful hours spent discussing the brilliance of the Verve label with the weirdos who hung out in funky record stores? Sure! But there's something to be said for finding hidden treasures by obscure artists with just a few keystrokes, all while lying in bed and dribbling coffee on yourself.

I am merrily typing Kay Starr's name into Spotify when my girlfriend returns to bed. She is deflated and collapses next to me in defeat.

"Did the computer win?" I ask, secretly resenting its victory because this probably means I'll have to quit Spotify and have sex.

She reaches over to me and touches my face. The feeling of human contact is foreign and oddly pleasant. "I need a break from that thing. Let's have sex."

My body begins to warm to the concept, but then I come up with a better idea!

"Or, we could watch that video of those goats that scream like humans."

"Or we could read an actual book…." she says, as we smile at each other with nostalgia.

We both understand that we have no real choice in the matter. Just like a robot, I open YouTube and type "goat screaming like human." □

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA — POR RODRO



Are there bankers where you live?
Là où tu vis il y a des banquiers?

No, there aren't.
Non.

I'm in tourist class...
Je suis en classe touriste...

... and they are... in first class.
...et eux en première classe.

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Rebecca

"I have just one more question," I say and close my notebook. I'm nearing the end of a Skype interview for this column.

"Rebecca, why did you volunteer to share your story?"

She hesitates for the first time since our interview began two hours ago. She stares at me in silence.

I'm not prepared to hear her answer.

My regular column in this space recounts some of our readers' most life-changing memories, written in first person—always in the present tense—to put you in their shoes, to relive their most important memories through their eyes.

Courageous volunteers share with me stories that have ranged from reconciling with ex-boyfriends to overcoming drug addiction. The stories I hear are often astonishingly tragic, but typically end with glimmers of hope and lessons to learn.

"Interviews" for this column are conversational. There are no pre-determined questions, and the story becomes about wherever our conversation takes us. Interviews last about two hours, and by the time an interviewee and I are done, we've usually laughed our asses off *and* cried our eyes out. Due to the extremely personal nature of the content we cover, interviewees and I bond quickly. We become friends on some level.

I keep their identities secret. I record every interview for note-taking and archival purposes, but Lavender and I publish only first names and middle or last initials, or cover up identities with aliases. Still, despite the anonymity, I find it remarkable that people are willing to share their tragedies with me—a stranger—who'll pass it along to thousands more.

At the end of every interview, I ask my subjects why they volunteer their stories. To this question I get two replies most often: "It's cathartic," or, "I wanted to help other people realize they aren't alone." Either way, I admire their candor.

But with Rebecca, the woman at the other end of my Skype stream, my final question leads to an answer I haven't heard.

Rebecca has short walnut-brown hair; it's pulled back into a ponytail when I speak with her. Her face is full and porcelain-smooth. A light pink blush highlights her cheekbones. She's wearing a UT-Austin hoodie and chews on its pull strings. She's 32 years old.

"Rebecca, why did you volunteer to share your story?"

Rebecca hesitates. She takes her hoodie's pull strings out of her mouth and stares at me.

Her face changes. The pink blush on her cheeks transforms into a splotchy red flush.

"Because, Justin," she says finally, "I don't have anybody."

The Skype stream pixelates as she adjusts her laptop. She wipes the corners of her eyes and takes heavy, short breaths.

"What do you mean?" I suddenly feel nervous, hoping that she intends, at most, her answer metaphorically.

"Well," she says, "I don't have much of a family, you know, but I don't any have friends. I have Facebook, and you're on there, but I don't *know* anybody. And that's all I have. I mean, I…"

She stops, clinches her eyes shut, forces her lips closed, and breaks down into loud, uncontrollable sobbing.

"I don't have anybody, Justin," she says, exasperated. The helplessness in her voice is palpable. She chokes on her words and can't catch her breath. The redness on her cheeks spreads across her face. She shakes as she tries to hold down her cry. "I don't have anybody."

"You've got me," I say, holding back my own tears. I want to reach through the screen and hold her. I want to grab her and force her to know that she isn't alone, that she's going to be OK. I have to make her feel better somehow. But I can't.

The video stream jerks around as she cries. She moans. The pain is unbearable for her, I can tell, and I feel terrible for asking her that final question—look at what it's done to her— and now I can do nothing but watch her and try to calm her down.

Her laptop settles, she gets off her bed, and she walks to her dresser. She stands by a Kleenex box, blowing her nose and wiping her face, jerking as she cries.

As I write this, CNN reports that Congress has lower approval ratings than zombies. Hysteria surrounds Lady Gaga's promotional efforts for her new album. Rand Paul is in flames over claims of plagiarism. And, until this moment, I was pissed that my hair was cut too short.

Then there's Rebecca, standing at her dresser, holding a ball of Kleenex, so enveloped in loneliness that she's literally writhing in pain.

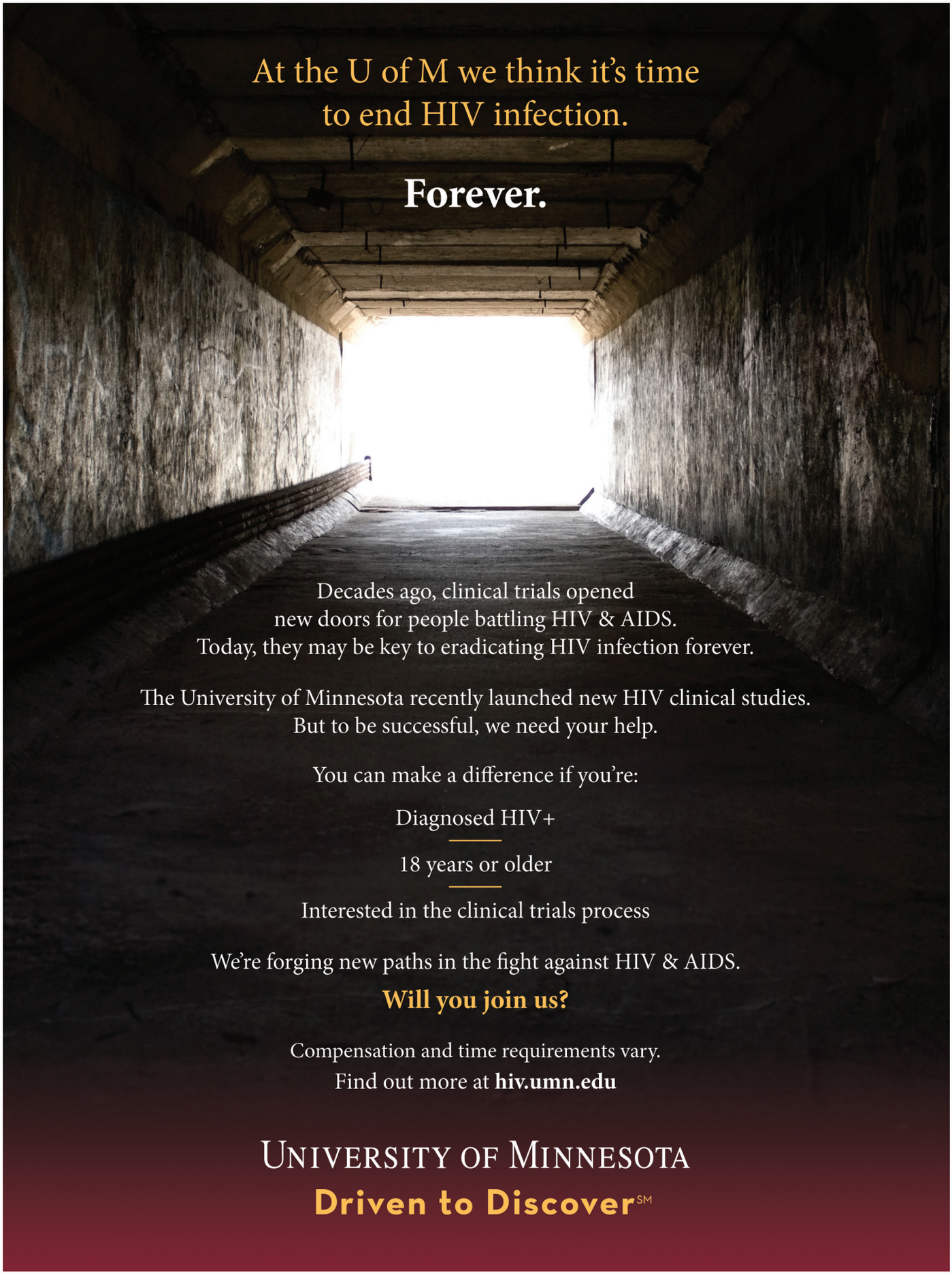
"I'm sorry," Rebecca says as she returns to her bed. Her cheeks are red and glisten under the ceiling light.

The Skype stream pixelates once again as she adjusts her laptop. When she comes into focus, she's staring at me, waiting for me to say something, waiting for me to give her company, to be the someone she's missing who'll make her feel okay.

And I notice for the first time that her eyes are blue. They're beautiful. They're the kind of beautiful you'd otherwise never imagine could hide so much pain.

Rebecca J. lives in Dallas. We're working on that loneliness business. □

Contact Justin to share a memory @ ThroughTheseEyes.JustinJones@gmail.com


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